

THE PRAXIS OF QUOTATION
IN TRANSITIONAL LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy | Hispanic Literatures

by
Mozelle Suter Foreman
January, 2017

© 2017 Mozelle Suter Foreman

THE PRAXIS OF QUOTATION
IN TRANSITIONAL LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURES

Mozelle Suter Foreman, Ph. D.

Cornell University 2017

The Praxis of Quotation in Transitional Latin American Literatures traces Latin American literary pragmatism through the figure of quotation. My first chapter analyzes Costa Rican author Yolanda Oreamuno's novel, *La ruta de su evasión*, and its characterization of the *choteador(a)*, a person who practices the art of *choteo*. I conclude that Oreamuno defines the latter, a form of Central American wit that hinges upon quotation, differently from her Caribbean counterparts, such as Jorge Mañach, as a politically sterilizing discourse and a form of collusion with an authoritarian regime. In my second chapter, I study Mexican author Rosario Castellanos's *Oficio de tinieblas*, and its appropriation of historiography to reconstruct the character of the gossip. I propose that Castellanos democratizes this role, revealing this character to be potentially any member of civil society, while she represents the state of political emergency as one in which gossip is suspended. In Chapter three, I turn to Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, and its depiction of the revolutionary feminist Flora Tristán. The novel transcribes, translates and adapts selections from Tristán's vast corpus of writing, and attributes to Tristán feelings of shame, guilt and also pride about these writings. I question whether quotation functions as a form of narrative voice. Ultimately, I argue that the novel theorizes a conflict between quotation's potential to solicit either empathy or political cooperation

with its quoted subject, offering the latter as the valid choice. Finally, my fourth chapter turns to the novel, *Dora*, in which Peruvian author José B. Adolph transcribes the memoirs of Dora Mayer de Zulen. These are memoirs in which Mayer analyzes the literature of Pedro Zulen, in order to prove Zulen's status as a messiah of the indigenist movement, and also to prove that she and Zulen were married in the eyes of God. I argue that the novel stages a confrontation between the hermeneutic strategy of Mayer and the philosophy of Zulen; ultimately embracing Zulen's perspective that the possibility of a correct reading depends upon the political saliency of the message that one reads for. In each chapter, I describe the conditions for the possibility of the use of quotation, the existence of the original text as a material support, and the author's ability to recur to that text.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mozelle Suter Foreman attended Arroyo Grande High School in Arroyo Grande, CA. She has a B.A. in Hispanic, Latino and Chicano Literatures from the University of California at Santa Cruz, CA and an M.A. in Romance Studies from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my committee for their support in completing this dissertation, and for their interest in the topic and the novels: Bruno Bosteels, Edmundo Paz Soldán and Brett de Bary. I would also like to thank all of the members of the 2009 graduate student cohort in Romance Studies; and especially Eddie Curran, Diana Garvin and Sylvia Hakopian, who provided advice on this and many other projects. I am indebted to Giselle Vitaliti, who has for years provided critical insight into many of the topics that appear in this dissertation. This dissertation owes to the work of the administrative staff of the Romance Studies Department at Cornell; and especially Rebecca Davidson and Rob Van Brunt. And I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Senior Lecturers of Spanish in the department; including Silvia Amigo-Silvestre, Mary K. Redmond and Tomás Bevia, who supported my dual labor as a teacher and scholar. Finally, I am grateful for the support of my family and extended family. My mother introduced me to Latin American studies, feminism and encouraged me to learn Spanish, and my father taught me to read literature before I could read.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Praxis of Quotation

10

CHAPTER 1

The Ethics of Choteo: Scenes of Language Violence in Yolanda Oreamuno's

La Ruta de su evasión.

31

AFTERWARD TO CHAPTER 1

Sergio Ramírez Quotes Yolanda Oreamuno in *La fugitiva*.

63

CHAPTER 2

The Bad News: Gossip Before the Child Crucifixion

in Rosario Castellanos's *Oficio de tinieblas*.

81

CHAPTER 3

Women Radicals' Writing in the 21st Century Novel:

A Case Study of Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*.

117

CHAPTER 4

Pedro Zulen in the Chapel of Burning Language:
Dora Mayer's *Zulen y yo* and José B. Adolph's *Dora*.

158

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Yolanda Oreamuno in her bathing suit. Page 73.

INTRODUCTION

THE PRAXIS OF QUOTATION

The possibility of considering quotation a praxis appears superficially to hinge upon another, intuited possibility: that of considering quotation an ethically significant act. This a priori is a fact of everyday life, for we widely understand that quoted material can be proprietary and that malappropriation can be injurious. This understanding, in turn, gives rise to indignation in the face of cases of plagiarism, and poignant feelings about the proliferation of malicious gossip. The practical dimension of quotation, and of literature that quotes, is most readily intuited when we recognize that some forms of quotation can do real, literal harm to others.

In this dissertation, the harm that quotation can do to others is often in evidence. Yolanda Oreamuno's novel *La ruta de su evasión* describes how its main character Gabriel attempts to overthrow his tyrannical father through subvocalization, or reading out loud: In a moment of synesthesia, he perceives his father to be a set of letters, which he then pronounces; But Gabriel is not only a participant in a regime of quotation; he is also a victim of it. Later in the novel, his classmate and rival Elena humiliates him by subvocalizing his own thoughts.

Rosario Castellanos's novel *Oficio de tinieblas* deconstructs practices of quotation in a Chiapan colonial community anthropologically, and challenges the post-modern conceit that gossip is often mobilized by the subaltern as a means of resistance. She posits, instead, a less academically salient but more plausible idea: That socio-politically vulnerable members of society are also more vulnerable to

gossip. Her narrative links a humanistic view of gossip with a catholic one: Gossip is an inversion of “good news” both in the sense that it doesn’t have a rational referent and in the sense that it disgraces others.

Mario Vargas Llosa, in his novel *El paraíso en la otra esquina*, imbeds quotations from the texts of the 18th century French feminist and socialist Flora Tristán inside of her interior monologue. He thus represents a practice of self-quotation at the same time that he enacts a practice of real quotation. In his novel, quotation is represented as a form of *auto-agresión*, because Tristán’s tendency to quote herself is synonymous with her penchant for aggressive self-criticism; She calls her own prose poor, immature and inaccurate. In this way, the novel represents and enacts a vicious attack on the same archive that it plumbs for its narrative.

Finally, José B. Adolph’s novel, *Dora*, quotes directly from the memoirs of Dora Mayer. To be clear: While portions of Castellanos’s novel are adapted from Chiapan historiography, and portions of Vargas Llosa’s novel read like creative translations of Tristán’s memoirs, José B. Adolph’s novel actually contains long passages that are lifted, word by word, from Dora Mayer’s memoirs. This language, the very language that Adolph reuses, did do real literal harm to someone: Mayer’s prose centers on the man she claimed she lost her virginity to. They were not meant to defame Zulen, but they exposed his family to derision. And so Adolph’s appropriation of this language also threatens to renew this injury.

The potential of quotation to do harm, however, is not proof of its practical dimension, but a symptom of it. In this dissertation I explore the practical dimension of quotation by examining its conditions of possibility: the contingencies on which it

rests. In doing so, I intend to denaturalize the production of quotational literature, and of literature in general.

To understand the limits of quotational literature it is useful to return to an ancient genre of the same: the *cento*. The cento is an original poem or narration that one composes by taking and rearranging lines from other compositions. Scott McGill has identified Ausonius, a writer of centos from fourth century France, as one of the earliest theoreticians of the genre. In a forward that Ausonius wrote to accompany his *Cento Nuptialis*, he prescribes some rules for the genre: “(The cento) is a poem compactly built out of a variety of passages ... to place two (whole) lines side by side is weak.” He then compares the cento to the Greek stomachion:

... you may say it is like the puzzle which the Greeks have called stomachion. There you have little pieces of bone, fourteen in number and representing geometrical figures. For they are quadrilateral or triangular, some with sides of various lengths, some symmetrical, either of equal legs or equilateral, with either right or oblique angles: the same people call them isosceles or equal-sided triangles, and also right-angled and scalene ... by fitting these pieces together in various ways, pictures of countless objects are produced: a monstrous elephant, a brutal boar, a goose in flight ... and numberless other things of this sort, whose variety depends on the skill of the player. But while the harmonious arrangement of the skillful player is marvelous, the jumble made by the unskilled is grotesque. This prefaced, you will know that I am like the second kind of player. (McGill, 3)

This passage underlines the original relationship between quotation and poesis. Ausonius compared the cento with the stomachion, first, as a genitive act. They both populate the world with vibrant forms. But, Ausonius also suggested that the cento compares with the stomachion because it uses ideal forms: lines measured out in halves or wholes, instead of geometric figures, identified by their angles. This

suggestion provides us with insight into one possible phenomenology of quotation; it hints at a givenness of quotation for Ausonius, who says of the cento, “Tis a task for the memory only, which has to gather up scattered tags and fit these mangled scraps together into a whole.” (2)

But today in Latin America, literary genesis through quotation is not a task for memory in the same way. Many of the novels that this dissertation discusses describe or perform quotation as a form of reading, an act that is mediated by text and its material supports. Both José B. Adolph and Mario Vargas Llosa do this through direct quotation. So does, in a less obvious way, Sergio Ramírez, who wrote the novel *La fugitiva* based on the life of Yolanda Oreamuno, and attributed quotations from obscure texts by Oreamuno to different characters in the novel. And it is significant that in Oreamuno’s own novel, her characters are incapable of experiencing a recognition of one another except as a type of reading.

This difference is politically important. Ausonius is self deprecating, but only to make a point: That the success of a cento hinges on the ability of its writer: *Ability*, for Ausonius, determined whether the writer’s creation was harmonious or monstrous. But for Ausonius ability was a virtue, it flowed from the writer’s access to a realm of pure memory, or ideal forms. The authors in this dissertation are also concerned with their ability. However, they exploit the philological record; and for them ability therefore is synonymous with contingency. Because a return to the philological record is a turn to material resources, and because the option of returning to the philological record also introduces the option of working against a contemporary elan that would seem to suggest the right lines.

The chapter in this dissertation that represents every stage of this difference is the fourth, which is about how José B. Adolph quotes Dora Mayer quoting Pedro Zulen. Dora Mayer believed that her ability to explain the meaning of literary figures that appeared in Pedro Zulen's texts was made possible by the fact that these were ideal forms. She believed that their a-priori status meant that she could analyze them and then use them to prove as categorically true or false claims that she had made about Pedro Zulen: That he was in love with her, that they had had sex and that la Asociación Pro-indígena was the organization through which indigenous rights in Peru would be redeemed.

José B. Adolph, in contrast, insists that his ability to write his quotational novel is a contingency. His narration includes long direct quotations and lovingly rewritten passages. His narration proceeds non-chronologically; but each part of it is dated and corresponds to the date of a real publication or diary entry. More than this, however, José B. Adolph has selected content for his novel that is not suggested by a contemporary *elan*. For instance, while Mayer's account of debates between Pedro Zulen and Joaquín Capelo about the usefulness of a mythological historical imaginary to indigenous liberation politics make for broadly interesting reading, her own reflections about the essential role of La Asociación Pro-Indígena in the unfolding of history are, frankly, quaint. José B. Adolph therefore also makes the decision to depart from a contemporary *elan*.

Contingency and Cooperation

The decision to depart from a contemporary *elan* to select content for a quotational novel presses the reader to either agree to cooperate with the political project of the source material or not. How or whether a quotational work of literature can press this issue, is already at the heart of the best criticism about a different genre of quotational literature: the *testimonio*. Rather than explore questions of propriety, this criticism, examines the extent to which *testimonio* solicits political cooperation with its subjects. As an example, we may turn to criticism on *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia*.

In 1982, *Me llamo* was published under the name Elisabeth Burgos, the Venezuelan psychoanalyst and anthropologist who recorded, transcribed and edited the testimony of Guatemalan activist Rigoberta Menchú. However, since 1985, and following a reclamation issued by Menchú, it has been published underneath the Guatemalan author's name. Nevertheless, Menchú has expressed ambivalence about the creation of this book, describing Burgos as the author of *Me llamo*, but qualifying that statement by saying that *Me llamo* is the book that she, Menchú, would have written if conditions had allowed.¹

¹ “Lo que sí efectivamente es un vacío en el libro es el derecho de autor, ¿verdad? Porque la autoría del libro, efectivamente, debió ser más precisa, compartida, ¿verdad?... Por un lado es también producto del desconocimiento de hacer un libro. Se necesitaba un autor y ella es autora.” Menchú quoted by Stoll. Stoll, David, and Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. *Rigoberta Menchú Y La Historia De Todos Los Guatemaltecos Pobres*. Madrid: Unión Editorial, 2008. It is this contingency that is often at the heart of controversies about testimonial literature, and not the difficulty of ascribing authorship. Authorship, it turns out, even in the case of *testimonio*, is rarely difficult to ascribe; merely time consuming. In the case of *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú*, for instance, it takes time to specify what Menchu said, what Burgos recorded, and what Burgos transcribed, and also to disclose that certain parts of Burgos' recordings have never been publically reviewed. But none of this is difficult.

In 1999 Robert Stoll published *Rigoberta Menchú and the story of all poor Guatemalans*, in which he states that *Me llamo* narrates some events that either did not happen or did not happen to Menchú. In 2004, John Beverley published a rebuttal of Stoll, *Testimonio, On the Politics of Truth*, which hypothesizes that the inclusion of content that was not witnessed or experienced by Menchú, could be explained by differences essential to discursive conventions in Indigenous narrative and European literature. Namely, that while truth claims made in the latter are bolstered by specificity, truth claims made in the former are bolstered by inclusivity, by their general relevance to their subject's community. It is therefore tenable, Beverley says, that Menchú included events experienced by others as a matter of propriety, rather than property.

But in *Testimonio* John Beverley misrepresents at least one aspect of Robert Stoll's argument, and obscures Stoll's one progressive criticism (of Menchú's readers): That audiences that assumed that Menchú was telling the truth in *Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú* had enjoyed her testimonio as though it were an autobiography. Consequently, while some members of Menchú's readership were inspired to behave

If anything, the context of the interpersonal relationship in which this book was written can serve as a mnemonic tool. The casual reader is sophisticated enough to absorb and keep these details in mind. Contingency, however, challenges cultural ideas about how writing is supposed to follow the acquisition of consciousness. One anticipates that when a person acquires political consciousness this may lead to unprecedented expressions, expressions that the speaker had not been capable of before, and that are therefore original. But Menchú compartmentalizes the event of *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú's* composition within the greater context of her political career, even as she exploits the opportunities that it opens up for her. (Stoll, Chapter 13).

philanthropically towards indigenous Guatemalans, they never achieved real political identification with Menchú or indigenous guerilla fighters. In this way, Stoll, as much as Beverley, criticizes the naivety of Menchú's readers, and their lack of cooperation with the text. He also gestures at a discomfiting fact that consumers of global literature often ignore: That literature can foment empathy without soliciting political cooperation; and that empathy is not a valuable substitute for cooperation.²

Without a doubt, these controversies about *Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú* are not as important throughout Latin America as they are in the US. In Mexico, for instance, the most recognized name in *testimonio* writing is Elena Poniatowska; and her novel, *Hasta no verte Jesús mió* (1969), had already been the subject of academic debate for almost a decade before *Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú* was written.³ Yet the controversies surrounding Menchú's testimony suggest a question about the novels

² This is also a valid criticism of cognitive hermeneutics.

³ *Hasta no verte Jesús mió* is an historical novel, told in the first person, adapted from first person testimony given by Josefina Bórquez to Poniatowska. The superficial differences between Bórquez and Poniatowska came to be seen as emblematic of the differences between *testimonio* writers and their subjects. To many it appeared that Poniatowska, a young, attractive white woman with international ties used Bórquez's poverty to adorn the writing. But Poniatowska's other *testimonios* came to be seen as emblematic in a different way: They demonstrated the role that accident could play in the composition of *testimonio*. In the case of *Nada nadie. Las voces del temblor*, for instance, Poniatowska, and also members of the writing group that she led for women in the 1980s, found their interview subjects by canvassing the streets in the immediate wake of the earth quake. It is notable, now, in retrospect, how many *testimonio* authors have stressed the role that accident played in the composition of their books. Elisabeth Burgos has posited that her interviews with Rigoberta Menchú occurred because Menchú found herself, unexpectedly, bored and unoccupied in France, waiting to go to Scandinavia to participate in a conference. The composition of all literature can be considered contingent. But, the role of accident in the composition of *testimonio* has become a trope. And it can offset the perception that an author has inserted themselves where they shouldn't be.

that appear in this dissertation that I wish to confront: To what extent do they foment empathy *or* solicit political cooperation with their quoted subjects?

Rosario Castellanos's *Oficio de tinieblas* is a predecessor of the *testimonio*. It exploits the testimony inscribed in Chiapan historiography in order to give voice to historical persons whose lives were destroyed in the caste wars that took place in Chiapas during the later half of the 19th century and that reportedly involved the crucifixion of an indigenous child. It cannot solicit empathy from its readership, because it inculcates that readership. It begins with a verse from *El libro del consejo* or *Popul V(v)uh*, which has been repurposed to explain Spanish domination in Chiapas within an indigenous religious framework: "Los del Daño, los de la Guerra, los de la Miseria / vosotros que hicisteis el mal lloradlo." Gil Iriarte posits that this quotation specifies that the novel's omniscient narrator possesses an Indigenous point of view. But it also stands as a speech act that homogenizes the novel's readers by inculcating them.

Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* transcribes the written testimony of Flora Tristán. This includes her testimony about the abuse she suffered in her marriage, her experiences with the French legal system and the misery in which she encountered proletariat women who were living outside of the institution of marriage. But Vargas Llosa sacrifices opportunities to solicit empathy from his readership and insists instead upon describing, as accurately as possible, the political platform of his subject. Is this the same as soliciting cooperation? It is not,. It *cannot* be. Because Flora Tristán's 18th century radical feminism, which attempted to conjure – almost mystically - the female socialist messiah, is not serviceable to a 21st century

readership. But by closing off even the possibility of cooperation, through the selection of a subject as politically irrelevant as Tristán, Vargas Llosa is that much more successful in betraying an aesthetic of world literature, and liberating his readership from their empathetic duty to his text.⁴

Sergio Ramírez's *La fugitiva* fulfills many of the generic requirements of *testimonio*. His novelization of Yolanda Oreamuno's life is based in part on testimony that he really did collect from women who knew Yolanda Oreamuno. The effect is operatic: A *contrapunteo* of voices of multiple women, who loved or were in love with Oreamuno, and who deeply empathized with her. The most heartbreaking element of *La fugitiva* is its protagonists' fight to maintain contact with her son, after her divorce. Ramírez exploits this part of Oreamuno's personal narrative as a literary parable: The son represents Central American writers who are *huerfanos de madre* in a literary sense, as they have been deprived of the memory of their region's literary matriarchs. But Sergio Ramírez has supplanted Oreamuno's political criticism, her confrontation with *Tican* insularity, with his own: A confrontation with the commercialization of Central American transnationality.

This replacement is one of the things that ultimately led me to expunge *La fugitiva* from the central place that I originally anticipated for it in this dissertation. It no longer gets its own chapter, and is instead addressed in an afterward to my first chapter, which is about Yolanda Oreamuno.

⁴ And it is also worth noting that Poniatowska's recent work, especially *Leonora*, is extremely reminiscent of *El Paraíso*. *Leonora* is a creative biography inspired by the art of its subject, British-Mexican painter Leonora Carrington. It functions much in the same way as the half of *El paraíso en la otra esquina* that is based on the paintings of Paul Gauguin does: presenting ekphrastic language, rather than actual quotation.

Sayings become quotations: Building worlds

She said or *they say*. Quotations or sayings. This dissertation is about the first. But the topic of sayings has imposed itself at various stages of writing. When the working title of the dissertation was “the ethics of quotations” someone asked if I worked on the ethics of sayings (or *dichos*).⁵ I am sure that they did not mean the ethical usage of sayings, but the ethical messages that sayings are believed to insist upon. The belief that *dichos* are essentially speech acts, by which we exhort a certain kind of behavior or conjure a best possible reality is widespread. It is reflected in exams, of a type that I discuss later in this introduction, that test proverb fluency by requiring that the exam taker translate proverbs as sentences that begin with “It is best...” or “one ought...”. Let’s keep the speech act status of sayings in mind, as we consider the meaning of a difference between quotations and sayings.

A prospective comparison of quotations with sayings conjures debates about the standing of oral versus written language. Do quotations receive scriptural privilege because of a hierarchy of senses that privileges the visual over the aural? Goth Regier, in his seminal history of quotation, *Quotology*, argues that verbal culture constructs itself dialectically, by facilitating a continual and imperative transformation of sayings into quotations, and of quotations back into sayings. Returning, in fantasy, to a time before the first Roman histories were written, he describes the original labor of the

⁵ Unknown respondent. "Piedra que Rueda': Reimagining Proverb Literacy and Social Mobility for the 21st Century" The Johns Hopkins University Program in Latin American Studies Spring 2014 Conference: Mobility and Exchange. The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore MD (April 11, 2014)

historian: This person was tasked with imagining scenes in which popular sayings were first uttered: In other words, he was tasked with taking units of language that were essentially formal, and imagining them as literal: Once this formal unit of language had become a literal statement, describing reality, it was then a candidate to be written down as a quotation. (It could then begin to be memorized, and reintroduced to oral culture.)⁶ This transformation reveals the diegetic, or world-building dimension of the paremiologist's labor.

Two vignettes from the recent history of paremiology reinforce this idea: Piaget's introduction of the proverb test, and structuralism's invention of a framework called the Great Chain of Being to explain how proverb usage works.

Early during the twentieth century, having unsuccessfully attempted to describe how people succeed at interpreting proverbs, a number of psychologists reversed their approach to the problem and attempted to describe how people fail. They were led by Jean Piaget, who in 1922 tested proverb comprehension in children between the ages of 10 and 14 to see when proverb fluency became concrete. Piaget's original study required subjects to match proverbs, which they were told were sentences that meant some *thing*, with statements that meant the *same thing*. They

⁶ "The *Rhetorica ad herennium* (first century BC) defined a sentential as "a saying drawn from life, which shows concisely either what happens or ought to happen in life ... Quintilian taught that "the oldest type of sentential, and that which the term is most correctly applied, is the aphorism, called *gnome* by the Greeks." He gives an example from Domitios Afer: "Princeps, qui vult omnia scire, necesse habet multa ignoscere." (50). "Macdonnel compiled his *Dictionary* to help readers understand foreign phrases the in vogue, Latin proverbs like "Stultitiam simulare sapientia summa est" (to assume the garb of folly is, in certain situations, the most consummate wisdom) and a counterquotation from Horace, *Sapientia prima est, stultitia caruisse*" (The first step to wisdom is to be exempt from folly) (100).

were then asked to justify their matches during a conversation with a clinician. In recent years, this study, summarized in “The Language and Thought of the Child” (1926), has garnered a fair amount of attention from modern paremiologists, especially in cognitive studies.⁷

What remains to be elucidated is the narrative aspect of Piaget’s work: His hospitality before the voices of his child-subjects. Piaget records the children’s justifications for their “false” matches and attempts to trace the source of these errors. Certain voices and personalities rise from the text. For instance, “Mat,” a girl of twelve, is eloquent and confident, and apparently one of Piaget’s favorite subjects. She matches the proverb, “White dust will ne’r come out of a sack of coal,” with the sentence, “Those who waste their time neglect their business,” and justifies the pairing by explaining that, “People who waste their time don’t look after their children properly. They don’t wash them and they become as black as coal...”⁸

Justifications like Mat’s constitute brutal deconstructions of traditional proverbs, as they separate, with almost surgical precision, each proverb from its a-priori meaning and resituate it within a fantasy. Jean Piaget called this process synchronism: a fabrication of points of encounter between sentences that the child encountered in accidental proximity to one another. He named the child’s egoism the source of this syncretic labor. And by egoism he did not mean something pathological,

⁷ See Richard P. Honeck’s *A Proverb in Mind*.

⁸ “Xy,” a pessimistic girl of twelve, pairs the proverb, “To every bird his own nest is beautiful,” with the sentence, “Insignificant causes may have terrible consequences,” and justifies the pairing by explaining, “A bird builds his nest very carefully, whereas if you do things carelessly, it may have terrible consequences.”⁸ Piaget, Jean. *The Language and Thought of the Child*. 139

but something healthy: The child's critical blindness to accidental, casual or random event. What he called *faith*. Here, and in anticipation of his later work, *The Child's Conception of the World*, Piaget posited this blindness as a condition of her originality. He observed that when confronted with her errors, she resisted correction, and defended her syncretic belief.⁹

After Piaget, there was an explosion in the use of proverb tests in clinical settings. Forensic psychologists used them to diagnose the mental age of suspected "idiots." And for decades, it was debated what typified a schizophrenic approach to proverbs. (Some researchers are still shamelessly administering proverb tests to schizophrenics.¹⁰)

But it was Piaget alone who traced, in *The Child's Conception of the World*, the ability to quote proverbs as an *emergent* competence, inside of an *emergent* moral framework. For Piaget, the stage at which children used proverbs bizarrely was a necessary intermediate stage in their moral development, at which point they were given to imagine a specific person, in a specific scenario, using a proverb. In other words, children understood proverbs as though they were quotations. Piaget thus locates the child at the same point where Regier locates the early historian.

⁹ Originality here should not be considered in a vulgar sense, which tends to link originality with individuality. In fact, the originality of the child predates the child's individuality. Originality, Piaget argued, can be observed through holistic observation. Three things must be observed: Idiosyncrasy (error, failure to meaningfully communicate with the adult), resistance to correction, and repetition among individuals of the same age range.

¹⁰ Kiang M1, Light GA, Prugh J, Coulson S, Braff DL, Kutas M. *Cognitive, neurophysiological and functional correlates of proverb interpretation abnormalities in schizophrenia*.

This trajectory was enacted again in structuralist criticism: Before WWII, there were a number of paremiologists working in present day Poland, Hungary and Russia whom the North American paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder would later bring to the United States. Their work was in the service of a greater project: the defense of minor cultures from foreign imperialism and nativist jingoism. For them, a structuralist philology promised to justify the existence of minor cultural artifacts, including folkloric artifacts such as myths, legends, and lyrics, by explaining them based on universal narrative structures. They also theorized that they could reconstruct partially forgotten cultural artifacts, such as pre-Christian narratives, using these structures as a scaffold.

One of the structures that these scholars identified was the Great Chain of Being. This was a continuum of generic categories, or spheres of being, to which most elements of a proverb were theoretically mappable: For instance, *meteorological*, *temporal*, *animal*, *political*. The community theorized that when a person interprets a proverb they map elements belonging to one category of being onto elements belonging to another. For instance, to use the proverb “His bark is bigger than his bite” to say “North Korea will not attack the US” one would transfer-map elements belonging to the animal category of being onto ones belonging to the political.¹¹

According to this theory, what made proverbs transparent to a member of a civilization, but not necessarily to someone who merely spoke the language of that

¹¹ Alternatively, I could interpret the proverb, “His bark is louder than his bite,” with another proverb: “a lot of thunder brings little rain.” In this case, I would be transfer-mapping elements belonging to the animal (low) category onto elements belonging to the meteorological (high) category.

civilization (We are surprisingly bad at interpreting proverbs in languages that we are fluent in but not native to) was the accessibility to them of particular diegeses, or imaginary worlds. Members of different civilizations imagine different imaginary worlds, containing different spheres of being, comprising a particular great chain of being. And they assign more or less status to elements from these spheres depending on whether they understand them to be closer to the divine or to the profane.

Incredibly, scholars working in the field of cognitive studies have cited the GCB as a valid concept as recently as 2005. See for instance, Richard P. Honeck's "A Proverb in Mind". However, as far as I know, none of these 21st century scholars address the original application that structuralists imagined for the GCB: The defense of vulnerable ethnic groups through the description of particular diegeses. The CGB doesn't really have the practical application that paremiologists originally imagined for it. We can't really use it to reconstruct a lost cultural artifact, or generate a new one that is authentic. But this scholarship, considered in light of its original aims, can inform our understanding of what motivates the decision to select a saying and to turn it into a quotation.

Certainly one motivation can be something formal that was already in the original discourse. For instance, a piece of meta-discourse, a self-quotation, e.g.: "I'd say...", might prompt a person to begin to quote *from* there. But another motivation can be a quoting subject's world building prerogative; the fact that they intuitively recognize, in a saying, or a quotation, a self-contained diegesis.

The novels that this dissertation analyzes begin and end quotations in radical places, upsetting the great chain of being, and upending that cosmology. Take, for

instance, Yolanda Oreamuno's *La ruta de su evasión* and its appropriation of the Aztec word, *tzintzunzan*. At the time that Oreamuno wrote, the vindication of folkloric artifacts was central to the aesthetic of her contemporaries. But Oreamuno was radically skeptical, not about the value of this project, but about its feasibility and how its success could be measured. *La ruta* is a portrait of urban, bourgeoisie life: It depicts a vicious, mocking kind of quotation, by which people undermine one another. Her only nod to *indigenismo* or *costumbrismo* is her decision to have her character Gabriel quote Nahautl at the end of his life. But the word that he samples, *tzintzunzan* isn't defined in the novel. Oreamuno asserts the sterility and miniscule scope of the kinds of indigenous diegeses that her contemporaries were capable of creating or intuiting.

Take also Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*. In one of the later chapters, *La ciudad monstruo*, the author breaks with the conventions of quotation that he has established up to this point in the novel. Whereas he has, so far, only sampled smaller portions of Tristán's texts, switching rapidly between the second and third person narrative voices as he does so, in this chapter he samples almost the entirety of a chapter from Tristán's *Paseos en Londres: Prostitutas*. This is an empathetically invested chapter whose existence partially undermines my overall claim about the novel: That it liberates its readership from their empathetic duty. Vargas Llosa's text corresponds to Tristán's nightmare vision of London, which Charles Dickenson called too grotesque to take seriously.

And there is also Sergio Ramírez's *La fugitiva*, which takes a quotation that the literary community has already assumed as a proverb, and turns it back into a quotation. Specifically, Oreamuno's assertion that (in Costa Rica) "Al que pretende

levantar demasiado la cabeza sobre el nivel general, no se la corta. ... Le bajan suavemente el suelo que pisa, y despacio, sin violencia, se la coloca a la altura conveniente”, has commonly been embraced, and reused, as a lapidary statement that describes Tican political sterility. Ramírez takes this statement, changes it slightly, writes it down again, and attributes it to a different character, in a different situation: Manuela Torres who is based on the singer Chavela Vargas.

Lapidary Praxes

Today, we still do not know how we interpret proverbs. We know that we do not simply memorize them. And we know that linguistic fluency alone does not empower us to interpret them. We also know that we are able to recognize multiple interpretations of a proverb as simultaneously correct, while definitively choosing just one interpretation as preferable.¹² By proving that some people do map elements of proverbs onto elements from imaginary scenes, cognitive studies can give us insight. I believe that cognitive studies will fail to give us a complete, or particularly meaningful understanding of this process, however, because of one aspect of proverbs, or sayings, that it cannot recognize: At the same time that participants in verbal culture are interpreting sayings, they are also transforming them back into (and sometimes this is

¹² In 1973 the North American performance scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett surveyed 80 Texan university students about the meaning of the proverb, *a rolling stone gathers no moss*. Individually, the students identified three main responses that they considered valid. Collectively, however, they expressed an overwhelming preference for a single response: That this proverb exhorts mobility. This episode is discussed by Wolfgang Mieder.

happening for the first time) quotations. This is not a process that exists in the mind, but on the page, and it is therefore beyond the scope of those who study the production of meaning in language in the mind.

In his introduction to his expansive treatise on Mexican paremiology “El Hablar Lapidario”, Herón Pérez Martínez elucidates how paremiology accommodates the nonhuman, or philological dimension of the humanities: “La relación del vocablo “lapidario” con el discurso es muy antigua y tiene que ver, desde luego, con el arte latino de grabar inscripciones en piedras. ... En efecto, una de las acepciones más tempranas de la palabra latina *lapidarius* es la que designaba lo escrito sobre una piedra como los epitafios” (50). The word lapidary, both in English and in Spanish, means “concise.” (Though it is not as common a word in English as it is in Spanish.) Lapidary speech, then, is concise, usually formulaic speech. But its root, *lapidarius*, has a wealth of resonances. The *epitaph* is writing about the dead, and also, dead writing: words that have been fossilized. It is writing that either refers to or speaks for that which is either inhuman (stone) or post-human (corpse).

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE INTRODUCTION

Beverly, John. *Testimonio : On the Politics of Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004

Honeck, Richard P. *A Proverb In Mind : the Cognitive Science of Proverbial Wit and Wisdom*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1997

Deane, Paul D. *Grammar in Mind and Brain: Explorations in Cognitive Syntax*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992

Kasanin, J S and D. C. Lewis Nolan. *Language and Thought in Schizophrenia: Collected Papers Presented at the Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, May 12, 1939, Chicago, Illinois*. New York: Norton, 1964. 60.

Kiang M1, Light GA, Prugh J, Coulson S, Braff DL, Kutas M. *Cognitive, neurophysiological and functional correlates of proverb interpretation abnormalities in schizophrenia*. J Int Neuropsychol Soc. 2007 Jul;13(4):653-63. Epub 2007 May 18.

McGill, Scott. *Virgil Recomposed : the Mythological and Secular Centos In Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Mieder, Wolfgang. *Proverbs : a Handbook*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004

and Alan Dundes. *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb*. New York: Garland Pub, 1981. 111.

Pérez, Martínez H. *El Hablar Lapidario: Ensayo De Paremiología Mexicana*. Zamora, Mich: Colegio de Michoacán, 1996

Piaget, Jean. *The Language and Thought of the Child*. [3rd ed., rev. and enl...] London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959

Regier, Willis Goth. *Quotology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010

Stoll, David. *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999

Poniatowska, Elena. *Hasta No Verte*, Jesús Mío. , 1994

Leonora. 1. ed. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2011

Nada, Nadie: *Las Voces Del Temblor*. México: Era, 1999

CHAPTER 1

SCENES OF LANGUAGE VIOLENCE FROM YOLANDA OREAMUNO'S *LA RUTA DE SU EVASION*

Costa Rican author Yolanda Oreamuno's novel *La ruta de su evasión* (1948) tells the story of a respectable bourgeois family living in San José and its members' attempts to escape their patriarch's subtle but brutal regime of emotional terror. Within this milieu, the character with which the novel is overwhelmingly concerned is the family's youngest son, Gabriel. Intercalated chapters represent scenes in which Gabriel struggles to develop his capacity for speech. In one of two scenes that I discuss in detail in this article, Gabriel attempts to develop a critical discourse about his father. In the other, he attempts to hold a dialogue with a sexual partner. These scenes are invariably representations of failure. Gabriel never realizes his discursive goals and ultimately self destructs as a speaking subject. At the end of the novel, he is reduced to repeating a single word, which is supplied with no referent by the narration: *tzintzuntzan*. At the same time, Gabriel's recession as a potential speaking subject is always reinforced by the emergence of other empowered speaking subjects. Into the space left by his silence or unintelligible utterance these figures introduce their own exploitative or abusive discourses. It is a trajectory that suggests as the central conflict of the novel the threat of imposed linguistic isolation. This is not linguistic isolationism, a silence maintained by the female members of Gabriel's household that

scholars have already productively explored as constituting a space of dissensus.¹³

Gabriel wants to speak in a public situation with and at other denizens of the capital who are not members of his family. He is preempted from doing so by actors whose public speech is already formed and continues to form itself at his expense.

This central conflict in Oreamuno's novel is foreshadowed in her earlier critical essays, which she published in *Repertorio Americano* between 1937 and 1948. Here, the author announces her intention to disengage from an autochthonous Latin American literary mode that, for many, was a form of praxis: folklore. At the same time, she also critiques *choteo*, a form of Central American wit, as a form of language violence: language that affects material harm on a target. Extant scholarship takes a first step towards synthesizing the content of Oreamuno's novel with that of her essays, emphasizing the ways that its personal narrative modes and characters' discourses contrast with the modes and discourses that she criticized. For instance, Oreamuno's apologists and detractors alike concentrate on her use of interior monologue and the way that this shifts the focus of the narrative away from elements of a folkloric Costa Rican landscape and onto elements of a psychological landscape, allowing her to condemn the repressive practices of the bourgeoisie. This synthetic labor appears uneven, however, due to the challenge of envisioning the vertiginous path that Oreamuno's disengagement from folklore and her confrontation with verbal violence actually take. For instance, she does not completely excise folkloric elements

13 On linguistic isolationism in the work of Oreamuno, see Janet Gold: "These stories show women who survive, who confront loneliness, isolation, fear and death; and from their inner resources they create what they need to sustain themselves" (Gold, "Feminine" 195).

from her fiction. At key moments she represents her characters as being in contact with extreme incarnations of folkloric elements, which threaten them with annihilation. Moreover, whereas in her essays Oreamuno adopts a comedic tone to critique the Tican instinct to cajole, in her fiction she portrays this activity as having deadly consequences for her characters.

Forms of Linguistic (In)hospitality

When *La ruta de su evasión* was published in 1948, Oreamuno was best known as a contributor to *Repertorio Americano*. Between 1936 and 1948 she published a total of twenty-three pieces in what was for almost forty years one of Latin America's most important forums for cultural criticism and literary expression. Oreamuno's earliest pieces for *Repertorio Americano* include flattering reviews of male authors' work, short stories for children, and above all, reflections on the Latin American landscape as something approximating what Lezama Lima called gnostic space, which does not "passively await insemination by a world-historical Idea or Spirit without collaboration" but "contributes to the intrusion of the Spirit" (Morse 88). This space has the power to conceive discourse. Or so Oreamuno wrote in her very early essay, "40° sobre cero" (1937). It posits that "el deseo de escribir" is "una situación impuesta por el paisaje" and "un proceso del ambiente" and not simply the manifestation of a "necesidad de exteriorizarse" (137). It also uses language to a synesthetic effect, creating surrealistic portraits of Latin American landscape using a verbal palette made up of light and dark, warm and cold, loud and quiet.

However, in her essay published two years later, “El ambiente tico y los mitos tropicales” (1939), the writer parodies her own prose from “40° sobre cero” and introduces a negative concept of Costa Rican exceptionalism with ramifications for her view of Costa Rican discourse. She characterizes Latin American landscape proper – that is something like Lezama Lima’s masterfully monstrous landscape - not as having collaborated in the creation of Costa Rican culture, but as having *bracketed* that process. First, she describes this greater landscape as marginalizing Costa Rica: “Se acabaron al norte los grandes acantilados en donde el agua puja mugiente todos los días, los inmensos desiertos arenosos y hostiles, los pavorosos fríos ... Sólo más al Sur... comienza nuevamente la sensación de aridez, de impotencia ante la naturaleza, de lucha recia y viril con lo imprevisto” (18). She then turns a bitter eye upon Costa Rican landscape in its particular dimension: it is “un cromo delicadamente lindo” (18). This tableau, in contrast with Lezama Lima’s *imago*, penetrates but does not impregnate. The Costa Rican psyche remains intellectually, as well as discursively, sterile.

According to the novelist Fabián Dobles, some readers felt that Oreamuno indulged in environmental determinism in these essays (Dobles 321). However, “El ambiente tico y los mitos tropicales” affects too sardonic a tone to be taken seriously as a work of environmental determinism. To begin with, it takes a mocking view of those “grandes naciones” (10) whose intellectual accomplishments proceed from an epic struggle with their own wilderness. In her essay, Oreamuno renames these accomplishments “grandes pecados” (10): Costa Rican culture, on the other hand, languishes “virginal,” (9) sinning infinitesimally when it does sin: “Cometamos todos

los días infinitesimales pecados” (9). Moreover, Oreamuno’s *paisajismo* is actually a pretext to model a new aesthetic of monotony that is not simply realistic but darkly surrealistic. Here she does away with the palette of light and dark, warm and cold, loud and quiet that she employed in “40° sobre cero”. Instead, Costa Rica is monochromatic: the color of the environment is “negro” (6). It is monoclimatic: Neither the country of “cero lluvia” (14) or “lluvia bajo cero” (14), it is the country “(donde) llueve nueve meses al año de la manera más desesperante del mundo” (15). Finally, Costa Rica is monolingual: “Indios, hay unos tres mil que viven en el interior de la Republica ... y, aunque algunos hablan dialecto, todos hablan español” (15).

In Oreamuno’s consideration, Costa Rica’s monolingualism is not reducible to the nation’s ethnic homogeneity. She is interested in a form of discursive monolingualism that is the gift of bourgeois enterprise. It is the work of maintaining, first, an optimal environment for commerce, and second, an optimal environment for the exercise of what she calls “demoperfectocracia” (21), a cosmetic form of democracy that disguises the chatter and gossip that constitute the real prerogative of Costa Rica’s bourgeoisie class. (The connections drawn by Oreamuno between gossip and democracy call to mind the work of her contemporary, the fascist philosopher Carl Schmitt.¹⁴) This labor consists partially in the neutralization of presumptive excellence. In Costa Rica, “Esta no necesidad de lucha trae como consecuencia un

¹⁴ Oreamuno’s criticism of the bourgeoisie echoes Donoso Cortés, as quoted by Carl Schmitt: “According to Donoso Cortés, it was characteristic of bourgeois liberalism not to decide in this battle but instead to begin a discussion. He straightforwardly defined the bourgeoisie as a “discussing class,” una clase discutidora. It has thus been sentenced. This definition contains the class characteristic of wanting to evade decision. A class that shifts all political activity onto the plan of conversation in the press and in parliament is no match for social conflict” (59).

deseo de no provocarla ... Al que pretende levantar demasiado la cabeza sobre el nivel general, no se la corta. ... Le bajan suavemente el suelo que pisa, y despacio, sin violencia, se la coloca a la altura conveniente” (19). Today, this quote has taken on an almost lapidary quality,¹⁵ but it originally refers to something specific: on the one hand the efforts of the press who bury good ideas in bad writing, and on the other, the tendency of the average Costa Rican to entertain himself by devising criticisms that would be inscrutable to their object should they ever get back to him or her. This activity employs a device that Yolanda Oreamuno identifies as *choteo*:

Además de la ignorancia deliberada y entrenada (diría yo), conocemos las sutiles vertebraciones del choteo. El choteo es una arma blanca, ¡blanca como una camelia!, que se puede portar sin licencia y se puede esgrimir sin responsabilidad. Tiene finísimos ribetes líricos de agudo ingenio; sirve para demostrar habilidad, para aparecer perito, para ser oportuno, filosófico y erudito. Afecta características distintas: el empirismo sociológico, y empirismo freudiano. Además, contra tan fina y elegante arma no hay defensa. Usted la encuentra esperándole en la boca de su mejor amigo, en la mano de su colaborador, en el periódico matutino y en el vespertino; en todas partes. Y lo que más: usted es corajudo, sutil y llama “al pan, pan y al vino, vino” si la sabe usar con acierto. Tiene la ventaja indudable de que usted no necesita respetar a nada ni a nadie, y que no se requiere mayor profundidad para su ejercicio. Creo que es el único tecnicismo verdadero de que podemos alardear, y sus “profesionales”, los sólo expertos en que abundamos. (Oreamuno, *Ambiente* 21)

¹⁵ A version of this quotation appears in Ramírez’s *La fugitiva*. However, in Ramírez’s novel it is the character Manuela Torres, based on the real life Chavela Vargas, who speaks this quote: “Cada vez que he regresado a Costa Rica ha sido para arrepentirme una y otra vez. Qué país. La ley del serrucho. Si te alzas más alto que los demás pendejos, no te serruchan el piso, te serruchan las piernas para dejarte al mismo nivel” (Ramírez 232). Ramírez also recycles this quote in an interview about his novel: “Yo quería hacer énfasis en la novela en que se trata de una sociedad patriarcal muy conservadora, que pretende reducir a la mujer a un lugar, que cuando intenta sobresalir le serruchan el piso o le cortan las piernas” (Bérmudez).

Choteo is a device explored exhaustively by the Cuban cultural critic Jorge Mañach. In his essay “Indagación del Choteo” (1928), Mañach describes it as “un hábito de irrespetuosidad” (14); habit, standing in opposition to action, and disrespect standing in opposition to respect, literally, “re-spicere: volver a mirar” (15). *Choteo* therefore has the potential to be “un vicio de óptica mental o de sensibilidad moral” (15) that manifests itself in a failure to act. In this case, the *choteador* does not recognize the myriad authorities that make themselves apparent to the virtuous man and calls him to action. These are not just institutional authorities, such as the church or government. Nor are they the obvious domestic authorities, such as the household patriarch. The marginal and the meek, children for instance, have authority as they call upon men to provide care. Likewise, great scholars have authority as they call upon men to study. Insofar as this is the role usually played by *choteo*, Mañach believes that it is primarily a toxic phenomenon. *Choteo* will be redeemed, Mañach asserts, only when it represents a selective disrespect for illegitimate authority. For this to occur, for *choteo* to become a kind of verbal praxis and not just a form of cruelty, the *choteador* will have to be made sighted and sensible. His optical and sensible disorientation will have to be corrected.

There is potentially a difference in the way that Mañach, as opposed to Oreamuno, defines *choteo* in a national context. While the *choteador* of Costa Rica employs medical, literary, sociological and Freudian empiricism and is published in the papers, the *choteador* of Cuba is heard on the streets and tends to employ crass, even obscene language. For this reason we might imagine that in the first part of the twentieth century *choteo* in Costa Rican and *choteo* in Cuban were merely homonyms,

Costa Rican *choteo* being analogous to English wit or Brazilian *esperteza* and Cuban *choteo* being something else altogether. However, Oreamuno's description, which emphasizes the deadening potential of the device, returns us to an originally negative judgment about it that exists in Mañach's work. Granted, this is a negative judgment that contemporary scholars have largely overturned: Roberto González Echevarría and Román De la Campa deconstruct this judgment in a way that allows us to redeem *choteo* as a constituent of Caribbean festivity and polyphony.¹⁶ However, Mañach's original investigation insisted that the victory of *choteo* in Cuba attested to the spiritual solipsism, egotism or autism of the Cuban subject and did not bode well for the development of an objective, altruistic or truly hospitable sensibility. This is a judgment that remains clear in Oreamuno's work: "(El choteador) sería inofensivo, si no le faltase, como antes anotara, el simplista sentido de proximidad" (17). For Oreamuno, as for Mañach, the fault in the *choteador* is one of senseless self-involvement. The fact that Oreamuno identifies instances of *choteo* in the press, which supposedly performs a documentary function, is only indicative that she believed that written and oral culture in Costa Rica were in fatal collusion. The verbal sins that the everyday Costa Rican committed on the street were patterned off of, reproduced, supplemented, or provided an alibi for those that appeared in print.

¹⁶ Roberto González Echevarría argues that Mañach fails to include realistic examples of *choteo* in his study. These would support the claim that *choteo* is closely related to González Echeverría's concept of *fiesta*: "The strongest link of the practice of *choteo* with the festive is through its thrust to freedom and its association of sexuality with death" (140). Román De la Campa contrasts Mañach's *choteo*, what he calls a "passive mimesis" (112), with another form of *choteo* that is an "interesting and innovative form of mimicry" related to Édouard Glissant's notion of diversion (97).

Yolanda Oreamuno's conception of Tican monolingualism constitutes part of her vision of a hospitable Costa Rica. Here, Oreamuno employs the word hospitable (*acogedora*) sardonically. Costa Rica is hospitable in the sense that it physically receives people from all over the world: political refugees and exiles. However, this capacity to physically receive, the physically inviting and even seductive aspect of Costa Rica, is predicated upon its spiritual infertility:

Costa Rica acogedora recibe con los brazos abiertos a los emigrados políticos de toda América, a los víctimas de 'X' y 'Z' tiranía. Los periodistas le hacen una visita, le toman el pulso, y si ven que el señor insiste en su innata rebeldía, se le ignora suavemente, y suavemente pasa también al anonimato definitivo. Grandes figuras políticas, literarias, revolucionarias y demagógicas han pasado tiempos de destierro en Costa Rica, y de su estado no existe más... que el nombre en las listas de inmigración. (Oreamuno, *Ambiente* 20)

Consequently, to speak of a language of hospitality in Oreamuno's work is really to speak of a brand of contraceptive language.

Oreamuno believed that the persistence of *costumbrismo* as a literary mode in Costa Rica in the 1930s was a sign of the sterility of the cultural landscape. This is the central idea expressed in "Protesta contra el folklore" (1944), Oreamuno's most infamous article. Here, she expresses her exhaustion - "literariamente, confieso por mi parte, que estoy harta, con mayúsculas" (96) - with what she calls alternately *folklore* or *costumbrismo*. In its ideological dimension, this is literature that corresponds to "el imperativo histórico (de cada nacionalidad) de lanzar la verdad dolorosa que penan, respectivamente, el indio, el cholo, el campesino, el mestizo y el criollo" (Oreamuno, "Protesta" 94). In its aesthetic dimension, this is literature that accomplishes verbally,

via transcription, what the *casta* paintings of old accomplished visually, voicing the races of Latin America: “el léxico se hincha con palabras de *atl*, *istl* and *chua* ...” (Oreamuno, “Protesta” 94). Oreamuno is explicit about the source of her exhaustion. It stems from her feeling that she has read the absolute best that the genre has to offer and that she is ready now to read a new kind of fiction that treats explicitly the psychological realities of urban life in Latin America, including bourgeois life, as it has been inspired by Yankee economic imperialism.

In truth, “Protesta contra el folklore” is a short, straightforward piece of writing, yet the chastising responses that it provoked provide an object lesson in the kind of discursive (in)hospitality that preoccupied Oreamuno.¹⁷ Shortly after its publication an erroneous rumor spread that it contained a protest against folklore based on the idea that Costa Rica itself did not have either enough folk or folk practice to write about. Costa Rican writer Fabián Dobles attests to the existence of this rumor and calls it fallacious. In reference to a critique that appeared in *El Tiempo* - “(Oreamuno) rehúye (el folklore) por estimar que ... en Costa Rica no hay material suficiente” (Dobles 321) - Dobles says, “Nos negamos a creer que ... haya sido otra cosa que una desviada interpretación del periodista al expresarle la escritora su posición subjetiva enfrente del movimiento novelístico costarricense.” (321) However, in a moment that now appears key and hints at the importance that such a rumor might have had for a young writer’s reputation, Dobles didn’t defend Oreamuno in any

17 “Given the high esteem accorded costumbrista writing in Costa Rica since the nineteenth century, and the number of writers who practiced it, many Costa Ricans considered (“Protesta”) an affront. Subsequent literary historians, however, have recognized the literary possibilities of urban existence” (Gold, *Reading* 216).

straightforward way. Rather, Dobles, a close contemporary of Oreamuno who competed in the same literary competitions (Dobles, as the author of the novel *Aguas Turbias*, would have shared the Rinehart prize with Oreamuno had she accepted it for her novel *Tierra Firme*.¹⁸) asserted that even though this was not her meaning, for Oreamuno to have written an article that had even the potential to be misinterpreted in this way was “peligroso”. (Dobles 322). This condemnation precedes a passive aggressive dismissal of what he understands Oreamuno to have wanted to do in her own writing. Dobles: “Hemos de advertir que respetamos que una escritora, cualquiera que ella sea, juzgue que debe hacer ‘novela psicoanalista y socialista’. He aquí un problema individual que solo el propio interesado debe resolver” (322).¹⁹

Beyond asserting that her psychological approach to literature was unpatriotic, Oreamuno’s critics maintained that it was derivative and underwhelming. Writers Seymour Menton and Abelardo Bonilla both claimed that *La ruta de su evasión*, as well as *Tierra firme*, manifested the influence of James Joyce. Menton: “Sus dos novelas, *Tierra firme* (inédita) y *La ruta de su evasión* (1949) ... reflejan la influencia de Joyce en la penetración del subconsciente” (Urbano 178). Bonilla: “Sus primeros ensayos revelan la influencia de Mann en el tema del tiempo y la del Proust en el tratamiento de los temas del recuerdo. Más tarde fue Albert Doblin el autor que la

¹⁸ Ann Gonzales discusses the six Costa Rican novels submitted to Farrar and Rinehart in 1940 as marking the year as a “watershed” moment in the history of Costa Rican literature (38).

¹⁹ Dobles’s tone is echoed in the writing of his and Oreamuno’s contemporary, Seymour Menton, who consistently portrays Oreamuno’s psychologically focused approach to literature as anti-Tico: “Contraria a la reserva natural de los costarricenses, Yolanda Oreamuno expone los pensamientos y los sentimientos más íntimos de sus personajes” (Menton 29).

impresionó y finalmente prevaleció Joyce, cuyas huellas son palpables en ‘La ruta de su evasión’” (Bonilla 354). Bonilla specified that this was a frustrated manifestation, for Oreamuno was tragically unable to use interior monologue the way that Joyce was:

Se empeñó a retar a la vida y en superar, en el campo de las bellas letras, lo que la vida no quiso darle. Y en esta empresa fue más allá de sus posibilidades. En su primera obra de fuerza, la novela, ‘Tierra firme,’ se revelan sus grandes condiciones y también sus limitaciones. La primera parte – sus recuerdos de infancia, lo vivido y lo cierto – es excelente... La segunda parte, en la que se aparta de su campo y ensaya la aventura conceptual, es muy inferior, como lo es literariamente su segunda novela, ‘La ruta de su evasión.’ (Bonilla 354)

These assertions aggravated the Costa Rican playwright Victoria Urbano, one of Oreamuno’s greatest devotees, both because Oreamuno routinely asserted that she had never read Joyce and because Urbano did not believe that Menton, at least, had ever read *Tierra firme* (Urbano 178). The novel had shared a prize for first place in the Hispanic American Writers Contest run by the New York publishing house Farrar & Rinehart, but Oreamuno had refused to let Farrar & Rinehart publish it and later denied knowledge of its fate.²⁰ Quotes like Menton’s and Bonilla’s therefore suggest that some of Oreamuno’s harshest critics possessed only second hand familiarity with her novels. Meanwhile, their assertions constitute a masculine criticism that Oreamuno demonstrates sensitivity towards in a brief but intense correspondence that she exchanged with Victoria Urbano after the publication of *La ruta de su evasión*. Here, Oreamuno emphasizes the dichotomous responses her experiment in psychological fiction received from female and male audiences. Oreamuno: “Es curioso, pero la

²⁰ Lilia Ramos provides a succinct summary of this event. (168) Luz Ivette S. Martínez speculates about the current whereabouts of the novel. (58)

respuesta mejor a mi libro la he recibido hasta ahora de mujeres” (Urbano 191).

Urbano accounts for this dichotomy in her 1968 monograph, *Una escritora costarricense: Yolanda Oreamuno*. Relying heavily on the work of her colleague, Costa Rican intellectual Lilia Ramos, she anticipates postmodern feminist critiques and judges that Oreamuno’s use of psychological narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness is justified by the inherent value of the project they successfully support, which is the verbal extraction of a tortured feminine subjectivity that achieves an unassailable opacity. Both Urbano and Ramos’s apologetic writing respond to a discourse about *La ruta de su evasión* that these women perceived as damaging to Oreamuno’s career.

The Novel as a Whole: Relaying Discourse

La ruta de su evasión is comprised of twenty three chapters. Some of these resemble short fiction. They tell self-contained stories from the perspective of a single character. Others possess a more novelistic quality. They refer to one another and their subdivisions correspond to shifts in perspective among multiple characters. The fragmented composition of the novel produces a phenomenon of “soledad en que (los personajes) están inmersos y ... falta de solidaridad colectiva.” (Martínez 66) However, if it is true that the novel’s characters live immersed in a “mundo aislado con sus problemas particulares” (66), this does not preclude their feeling empathy for one another. Empathy, and ultimately an individualistic embrace of survival replace “todo ideal que les sirva (a los personajes) de aliciente para superar sus circunstancias

particulares” (67), thus marking the narrative as distinctly and self-consciously bourgeois. While this article focuses on the disintegration of Gabriel as a speaking subject, the novel as a whole can be summarized as a cycle of verbal disintegrations and integrations that propel empathy and engender survival; a sort of verbal, emotional and libidinal relay race.

At the beginning of the novel, Gabriel is living at home with his father, Don Vasco, his ailing mother, Teresa, and his two brothers, Roberto and Álvaro. The brothers’ discourses and sexuality are dictated by their father, who prioritizes his sons according to their birth order. He has prepared his eldest, Roberto, to replace him as patriarch and has strategically neglected the other two. Roberto therefore speaks with authority and ridicule, although his discourse, which is stilted and over-determined by his obsession with healthy eating and physical fitness, is absurd. Roberto is also allowed to marry and bring his wife Cristina home with him. Alvaro, on the other hand, as the youngest brother, is laconic and is limited to expressing his sexuality through compulsive masturbation. Gabriel exists somewhere in between, a bookish young man who uses his literacy to spar with Roberto but who has difficulty speaking to his peers. The only interlocutor he has is his mother’s maid Aurora. However, Gabriel seems to disdain Aurora and resent that she understands him. Teresa herself speaks little but has a rich interior monologue.

Of the three brothers, only Roberto survives his upbringing. After Cristina dies in childbirth, he begins to speak with acumen. He confronts Don Vasco, accuses him of terrorizing the family, then leaves the house forever. Alvaro, however, never acquires any proper discourse or sexuality and Gabriel eventually unravels, his

attempts at self-expression giving way to gibberish and finally muteness. His sexuality, which he attempts to express first to a student colleague, Elena, is frustrated, and he later capitulates to be with Aurora. Meanwhile, Teresa's capacity for outer speech declines until the narration is confined to her interior monologue. Because Teresa has insight into her children's experiences her discourse comes to resemble an omniscient narration. Teresa's interior monologue disappears shortly *after* her death midway through the novel and her point of view is replaced by that of Aurora, who becomes a true protagonist. Aurora retains a clear memory of Teresa's advice for constructing a happier life beyond the walls of the Vasco household. The novel ends after she witnesses Gabriel's suicide, at which point she feels that she is able to apply these lessons.

The novel largely neglects the perspective of Don Vasco. Consequently, he does not appear as a protagonist of the cycle described above but is completely identified with the environment, or house, where it takes place. Vasco is power *demoperfecto*. Although he possesses some stereotypically and even folklorically *machista* vices – he gets drunk and is also a philanderer – his most important characteristic is his empiricism. He is self-consciously and intelligently cruel and his cruelty always supports the project of maintaining bourgeois and patriotic respectability. It fortifies the household as a sovereign space, it procures the labor of the households' female members and it assures its own uneven reproduction in his sons. Additionally, Don Vasco's cruelty is an outlet for his own considerable creativity. On a day to day basis, he enjoys the creature comforts of bourgeois life, yet he also creatively contrives to turn those comforts into terrifying symbols for his

family. For instance, he provides better care for his dogs than for his children, a gesture that terrifies Teresa, who interprets it as a sign of the children's disposability. Don Vasco's representation of repressive, sterilizing power is further suggested by the fact that he engineers the exile of his friend Esteban, who is his wife's only full conversational partner.

Subsequently, I will present two scenes of linguistic violence from *La ruta de su evasión*. Both depict the linguistic sterilization of the character Gabriel. The order in which I present them reflects the order in which they are sequenced in the novel. The first is about a metaphorical readership. Gabriel will attempt to read his father in order to locate him in one of San Jose's brothels. However, his reading will prove a futile activity. In order to explicate this scene I will introduce a new figure of language: subvocalization. The second scene is, in contrast, about the end of readership. Gabriel will be forced to put down a book and talk to a sexual partner. In this scene we will return to the figure of *choteo*. I will argue that Gabriel is subjected to a radicalized, perfected form of *choteo* identified with the automation of middle class, educated women. I will end this discussion by specifying the consequences of this sterilization.

Scene 1: No, no quiero ir allí

In this scene, Gabriel practices a type of language that I understand, metaphorically, as a form of subvocalization. The term subvocalization has been appropriated from literacy studies. It is a figure cut from that field.²¹

In literacy studies, subvocalization is the technical term that refers to what we commonly call ‘reading under one’s breath.’ This is different from ‘reading out loud.’ While reading under one’s breath means to speak, the person who reads under their breath does not speak to anyone else. A literal example would be a reader moving their lips, their mouth or even their throat muscles as they read, while not producing any audible sound. Furthermore, literacy studies has traditionally posited subvocalization as a rudimentary type of reading. On the one hand, pedagogues have encouraged subvocalization assuming that it belongs to an interstitial stage in the development of true literacy. On the other, pedagogues have discouraged and even punished subvocalization in order to ensure that this stage gives way to the next. According to this model, true literacy emerges as pupils’ subvocalizations are transformed into an interior monologue and is only fully accomplished as this interior monologue – occasionally considered an advanced form of subvocalization in its own right – becomes subjectively indistinguishable to the pupil from her own bare thoughts. The fluent reader, the critical reader, is a mind that is able to direct itself towards the meaning of the text she reads as a pure object. This philosophy has given

²¹ The term subvocalization was originated in this context by Edmund Huey in 1908. Although, he originally refers to it as “inner pronunciation” or “inner speech.” Also related, is what Huey calls “word sound”: “The fact is that meaning is part and parcel of word-sound and word-utterance, as these ordinarily occur in reading and thinking.” (164).

way to certain harms. It has inspired some truly brutal pedagogical techniques, including techniques such as gagging the reader to prevent subvocalization.²²

The scene begins with an interpellation. Gabriel's older brother, Roberto, calls to him, "Gabriel, ve a buscar a papá" (9), and Gabriel responds, not verbally, but physically by starting to walk. This physical response is a total physical response. A narrator states that Gabriel walks without thinking, empty of thought, "Camina mucho rato. Vacío de pensamientos" (10). At the same time, the narration conducts a phenomenology of the total physical response.²³ First, between its utterance and Gabriel's corresponding movement, the phrase "ve a buscar a papá" seems to reverberate. This is effected, above all, through the repetition of the line within Gabriel's inner monologue. Gabriel thinks, "Gabriel, ve a buscar a papa, eso fue todo. ¿Por qué yo y no él?" (9). Most importantly, this interpolating phrase is suggested as having special content. For, although Roberto does not tell Gabriel which way to go to look for their father, Gabriel thinks that Roberto's voice *seems to signal without mentioning* this content, "Tiene su voz una nota y su gesto una intención que parecen señalar crudamente el camino sin mencionarlo. ¿Por qué pienso esto? ¿Por qué pienso que es eso?" (9).

²² "It is a common myth that subvocalization – or more technically, covert speech behavior – retards reading proficiency. Some teachers have attempted to prevent subvocalization by taping lips or filling the mouths of pupils with marbles, by wrapping the tongue around a pencil and so forth. However, such efforts to inhibit subvocalization are futile, for the speech musculature still responds during silent reading even when so inhibited" (Corsini 258).

²³ Total physical response is a pedagogic concept. Conceptualized by James Asher, the total physical response represents the interiorization through movement of a language first encountered outside the body (Asher 3 - 17).

For Gabriel, *the way to go* will mean speaking realistically about the power structures that exist in his home. Specifically, Gabriel will have to describe his father.

This is determined when, after walking for some time, Gabriel gets in a taxi. At this moment, Gabriel is mute. It is the driver who must speak first and ask him where he wants to go: “Toma un coche, y cuando el chofer pregunta la dirección, su turbada cara es para el experto la mejor respuesta. Lo mira. Repite la pregunta” (12).

Gabriel responds, “No, no quiero ir allí” (12).

This response interrupts what would have been a natural discourse between Gabriel and the cabbie. Effectively, the cabbie has asked *Where do you want to go?* and Gabriel has replied, *No I don’t want to go there*. There is a critical non-correspondence between the interrogative *where* and the referential pronoun *there*.

Only the effect if not the sense of Gabriel’s response can be appreciated upon comparing the original phrase “no quiero ir allí” with the subsequent clarifying statement that Gabriel proffers, “Dije mal. Si quiero ir ahí, pero no soy yo él que quiere” (12). Gabriel does not want to go “allí” but does want to go “ahí.” He wants to go, but it is not him who wants. The negation and the affirmation cancel one another out and we are left only with the deictic and subjective twinnings: allí/ahí and yo/él. These twinnings stand in for an implicit desire which is also a destination: The father’s desire and the brothel where he fulfills it.

This is not yet an integrated discourse that anticipates Gabriel’s subvocalization.

The cabbie offers to take Gabriel to a brothel, but Gabriel has not the slightest clue as to which of San José’s brothels his father might have retreated to. The cabbie

therefore elicits a description of Don Vasco from Gabriel for the purpose of determining, based on the man's character, which brothel they should try first.

The nature of this exchange belies Victoria Urbano's claim that Oreamuno's "literatura urbana" (Urbano: 56) does not configure human misery within economic relationships, for there is a strong economic dimension to this exchange. First, both Gabriel and the *taxista* are strongly concerned with the idea that speech can be quantified as insufficient, sufficient or excessive within an economic schema. Gabriel, for instance, is worried that he will say too much: "Otra vez estoy diciendo más de lo necesario... Mis palabras salen por si solas. Esto es lo que menos quería decir, y lo he dicho" (13). Meanwhile, the cabbie needs Gabriel to describe his father in enough detail so that he can be sure to avoid the right brothels long enough to take all of Gabriel's money: "Después de todo es un buen negocio; toda la noche rodar... Lo llevaré primero allí en donde seguramente no está. Si lo conociera... Si me lo pudiera pintar" (13). In this way, storytelling is configured as an economic loss for the storyteller and as an economic gain for his listener.

Additionally, Gabriel worries about the impropriety of his speech. That is both the possibility that in describing his father he will say something inappropriate and that he will express a thought that is not proper to him, Gabriel: "¡Maldita sea! Ya me pierdo, estoy diciendo cosas que no entiende nadie. Y siento que diré cosas peores" (12). This worry intensifies as Gabriel senses that the inquiries of the *taxista* are provoking him. When the taxi driver asks Gabriel, "¿Cómo es su padre?" (13), Gabriel's inner voice responds, "¿Qué cómo es él? ¿Qué tendrá que ver esto con que lo encontremos? Nunca había pensado antes cómo es él. Lo he sentido. Algo así como

un peso encima. Pero no lo recuerdo. Veo la casa... Pero no él. Sé como es. Veo las palabras con letras que corresponden a su fisonomía. Pero no puedo ver su cara” (14).

Here is the crux of the problem: the *words with the letters that correspond* to the father’s physiognomy. Gabriel’s inner voice reflects upon these: “Palabras, palabras de consonantes y vocales, sonidos, oídas dentro, formuladas afuera” (14).

Two things are happening for Gabriel at this moment. Both involve a struggle of perception that is, basically, a struggle to bring into focus a figure against its background. This is taking place both on the level of Gabriel’s imagination of his house and on the level of his discourse about his father. Gabriel must constitute the figure of his father by recognizing in him the qualities that he is as yet only able to recognize in the house. Though he knows, preternaturally, that these qualities are already his father’s. For Gabriel, this is a literary experience. These qualities are subdivided into words and letters. Bringing them from the house and into the father will be like hearing the words on the page, a subvocalization.

This is the fullest, most complete reading of Don Vasco that Gabriel comes to express:

Es arrogante, violento, le gusta que le obedezcan. Se hace obedecer. Es... ¿Cómo le dijera...? Es vanidoso. Se preocupa mucho de su propia persona. No se preocupa nada de los demás. Nunca ha dicho a qué sitios va ni nadie se atrevería en la casa a preguntárselo. Ni cuando regresa. Creo que le preocupa mucho, muchísimo, lo que los demás, que no son de la familia, piensan de él. Me parece que siempre está tratando de aparentar lo que no tiene, lo que no es. Con los extraños es muy generoso, muy cortés; con nosotros es duro, implacable. No tiene compasión de nosotros. Nunca demuestra nada. ¡Es cruel! ¡Oh! ¡Es muy cruel! (14)

The question is whether Gabriel is able to interiorize this reading and become an accomplished reader after this subvocalization.

Gabriel is able to internalize the content of this reading with mixed success: On the one hand, he feels alienated by his own words: “Nunca me las hubiera dicho ni a mí mismo” (15). On the other, he now judges that the words are sufficient: “Nada sobra. Es así” (15). The sufficiency of Gabriel’s speech is proven by his acquisition of a distasteful but realistic idea of his father. “¿Pero es que para hacer una pintura realista de él debo recurrir a ideas tan desagradables?” (15).

In this way Gabriel comes to partially repair his subvocalization, transforming it into a genuine reading. However, the majority of the chapter that opens with this scene actually takes place after these linguistic accomplishments. What concerns us, then, are their consequences, which include an apparent and paradoxical self-betrayal on the part of the now speaking subject, Gabriel.

As the night wears on, Gabriel begins to express what originally he could not stand to read in his father: a sadistic misogyny. This expression is at first practiced. The first time that Gabriel visits a cantina during his search, he thinks to himself about the women there, “Yo no vengo a golpear, vengo a buscar a mi padre, debieran saberlo, no quiero que estas mujeres piensen que vengo a golpearlas; no le pegaría a alguien atado ... ellas están atadas” (19). However, later in the evening, Gabriel does sleep with and beat a prostitute: “¿Era eso tocar? ¿Era eso golpear?” (24). Later on, this expression is articulated. In the last cantina he visits, Gabriel issues a discourse that is properly his father’s: “¿Para qué sirve el cariño? Que se me ... odie ... y respete ... así es mejor ... Siempre se lo digo ... Como a ti ... Es ... una idea... mía” (25).

Confirming that Gabriel is now a quoting, rather than a speaking subject, at the end of this vignette there is a shift in subjectivity. In a nearly singular instance, Don Vasco appears as a protagonist and it is through his ears that we hear Gabriel. Don Vasco recognizes the appropriation of his own discourse and becomes enraged. However, his rage does not stem from a feeling that he is being mimicked. Rather, Don Vasco feels that, along with words that might have been his, his philosophy has been appropriated: “¡Y ese imbécil se permite exponer como suya la idea del respeto!” (26). His subsequent punishment of Gabriel, whom he drags out of the cantina and back home, can be taken as a sort of anti-pedagogy. Don Vasco has preempted Gabriel from interiorizing a philosophy from which he, Don Vasco, derives power.

Scene II: *Te voy a contestar todas las preguntas que probablemente intentas hacerm*

This second scene portrays the development of a sexual relationship between Gabriel and his schoolmate, Elena Viales. Educated, outwardly articulate and sexually assertive, Elena is a foil for all of the female characters that belong to the Vasco household. More importantly, Elena has been suggested by critics as an avatar for Yolanda Oreamuno herself. Victoria Urbano, alluding to Yolanda’s practice of signing her work simply “YO” wrote, “Con el personaje de Elena tenemos ya una visión completa de ese YO interior de la autora que actúa en el mundo de sus ficciones” (145). Urbano also believed that Elena was an aspirational figure in a general sense: “La única que parece luchar por su libertad es Elena” (145). More recently, Herbert E. Craig, writing on the history of the psychological novel in Latin America after Proust

has posited that if Elena was supposed to be an aspirational figure, she still invokes Oreamuno's internalized chauvinism towards Latin American women, "(Elena's father)... was of French origin and very wealthy. Dissatisfied with the submissiveness of Hispanic women in general and of his *criolla* wife in particular, he raised Elena as a free spirit and he encouraged her whims. Here we can see one aspect of Oreamuno's critique of timid women, but also a facet of her own personality, which struggled to be free" (Craig: 103).

A close reading of Elena's discursive practice, however, supports a very different understanding of the character. Elena is the novel's most accomplished practitioner of *choteo*. She calls a spade a spade, encountering the discourse of others with radical objectivity and yet with zero respect. As a *choteadora*, Elena stands as an unparalleled destructive force in the novel and chief agent of the linguistic sterilization of Gabriel.

We first meet Elena when she interrupts Gabriel as he is reading: "¿Qué lees?" (110). Gabriel then reflects on the harm these words have caused: "Como ya nadie aquí le habla, por estar habituados a su silencio, Gabriel la mira con la sorpresa de quien ha sido despertado en la profundidad de un sueño. La sorpresa tiene grados ... como en las quemaduras, quemadura de tercer grado. La de tercero, es porque ella no lo conoce" (111).

Gabriel does not respond to Elena's question aloud. Instead, his inner voice responds by formulating its own questions, "Debe de ser de segundo curso, porque las mujeres nunca pasan del segundo curso, a menos que sean muy feas ... aunque sean

inteligentes no pasan de ahí, les da miedo. En medicina, porque el profesor de anatomía hace preguntas ofensivas” (113).

At the same time that Gabriel’s inner voice formulates these questions, Elena states that repeating oneself is a liability of women. She tells Gabriel that she will not repeat herself. Instead, she repeats Gabriel’s thoughts for him: “te voy a contestar todas las preguntas que probablemente intentas hacerme: estudio medicina, estoy en el cuarto curso; no me dieron miedo en el primero las preguntas de los profesores ... les di yo miedo a ellos” (114).

In this way, Gabriel’s inner voice pairs with Elena’s outer voice in a curious fashion. Whatever Gabriel thinks to himself Elena later articulates. The result is a redundancy on the level of discourse similar to quotation. Gabriel’s interior monologue reappears inside of Elena’s direct discourse, but Elena’s monologued dialogue (to invert a phrase used by Urbano, *monólogo dialogado*²⁴) also mirrors subvocalization. Subvocalization, as we have seen in the case of Gabriel, is a discourse that represents a skip: The elimination of a moment of necessary encounter between the subject and the content of his discourse. Elena’s monologued dialogue also represents a skip. Yet this is not a skip necessary to the production of an ontological subject predicated upon the content of his discourse. Rather, this is a skip necessary to the production of a social subject. By cold reading Gabriel, Elena takes the upper hand and deprives Gabriel of the chance to emerge as a conversational subject.

²⁴ Urbano uses this term to refer to Oreamuno’s use of the second person to create interior monologue for her characters.

At this point, Elena invites Gabriel to conduct an autopsy with her. Gabriel silently consents and the two move to a private autopsy bay that Elena's father has had built for her in their home. Here, Gabriel and Elena find a body already laid out for them but covered by a sheet. As Elena invites Gabriel to see the body and folds back the sheet Gabriel thinks about peeling a fruit. The body is revealed to be that of an Indian woman.

The autopsy itself is narrated entirely by Gabriel's inner voice, which uses the future tense. "En ese vientre entrarán su bisturí y el mío, y se encontrarán sobre la misma herida que ya no va a sangrar... En esta inútil violación, el olor corrompido de la india muerta llegará directamente a su nariz que no ha de notarlo, y a la mía que insistirá por encontrar, no el olor del cadáver, sino el olor de ella" (119). Here, the future tense represents the dispersal of Gabriel's desire for Elena. With the body present, this is a triangulated desire. "(Elena) estará a un lado y yo al otro, y entre los dos, quedará el vientre de la muerta, su vientre de seguro fértil" (120).

During the autopsy, Gabriel chooses to dissect the woman's skin. His interior monologue explicates this choice:

Yo prefiero mirar de cerca esta piel melosa ... quiero mirar en la célula la reacción del sol y adivinar en cada poro el pueblo de su nacimiento; si la quemó la sol de altura o la doró bochorno de costa, quiero ver si es india de casta noble, porque entonces tendrá el poro fino, y no faltará ni sobrá una sola capa en su piel perfecta, y la grasa debajo será blanca ... y suave. (120)

Inscribing inherently insignificant subphenotypical traits in a mythic historical narrative, this explication parodies a folkloric discourse. Elena will in short order extract this discourse from Gabriel.

After the autopsy, Elena takes Gabriel into her salon, where she offers him what she preternaturally knows to be his first glass of whiskey. She tells him not to dissimulate this. Then she tells him something unprecedented: As a scientist, she is not able to think or speak the way that she knows that he is able to think and speak. That is, she is not able to think or speak abstractly. “Puedo entender (el pensamiento abstracto) pero no puedo llegar a él por mi misma” (126). Elena uses this confession as a pretext to exhort Gabriel to model abstract thought for her. What was he thinking, for instance, as they were performing the autopsy?

It is under these conditions that Gabriel repeats himself, or his own interior monologue. At the same time, he tries to challenge Elena’s preternatural knowledge of him:

¿Recuerdas que te dije yo escojo la piel? Habrás que saber que lo hice porque esperaba encontrar allí el síntoma de alguna curiosa enfermedad. Estabas equivocada ... Pensé que la piel tenía un color prieto, y que bajo ella, la grasa sería más blanca ... yo escogí la piel; no para encontrar allí la rara enfermedad ... sino para mirar en el grano de esa piel la casta, y en el color de esa piel el pueblo de su nacimiento. (128)

Here Gabriel probably comes closest to assuming the role of a proper speaking subject who is able to exteriorize his thoughts. This is true even if the tiresome way in which his interior monologue now reappears inside his direct discourse hints at some persistent organic pathos. And Gabriel will try to leverage the momentum he acquires during this exposition to finally overwhelm Elena. The chapter ends as Gabriel, having adopted some of Elena’s candor, her “descaro” (127), threatens his colleague with a passionate kiss: “Voy a besarte” (135).

Elena, however, deflects and deflates this threat. Before he can make such declarations, she tells him, “Tienes que saber cuál es tu deseo. Y yo te lo voy a decir para que te familiarices con él” (134). His project, she affirms, is not to kiss but to humiliate her. “Tu deseo no era besarme, o si lo era, por encima de este estaba el de humillarme” (134). Furthermore, Elena clarifies that Gabriel has sabotaged his project by speaking before kissing. “(Humillarme) lo conseguías con la palabra más que con el gesto. Por eso hablaste. Oye esto, Gabriel, y no lo olvides nunca: casi todo lo que es verdad es silencio. Casi todo” (136). In this way, Elena not only affirms that she remains closer to the source of Gabriel’s discourse than does Gabriel himself, but also asserts her own non-proficiency in abstract thought as the source of her superiority and greater power.

Elena, far from representing a complete vision of Yolanda Oreamuno’s *YO interior*, has no interiority. She is supplied by the narration only with a direct discourse patterned off of the interior monologue of Gabriel. However, this is not the imitation by one who is less powerful of someone more powerful. Nor is it the imitation of one who mimics or cajoles as an act of resistance or dissension. Nor is it *even* the verbally violent act of one who seeks to humiliate another through mocking. Rather, Elena, as mimic, is the blunt tool of a larger, sterilizing verbal violence.

In fact, Elena Viales appears as a sort of Frankenstein’s monster, pieced together and animated by a single, masculine, human creator: her father, Fernando Viales, is a perfect representation of the “emigrado politico” that Oreamuno wrote about in “El ambiente Tico”, who is neutralized by means of indiscriminate toleration. He is a French expatriate whose radical positivism has flourished, unchecked, in Costa

Rica *acogedora*. Viales claims that Elena is his sole and intentional creation. She has no mother, he claims. She is a “criatura transitoria,” (218) or intermediate species, that he alone has created as part of a process of preparation for the emergence of a final creation which will be “un tipo nuevo de mujer consciente” (218). She possesses in part the capacity to be useful and happy that that late species of woman will possess in full.

Adolfo Castañón has described succinctly, but accurately, the wholly inappropriate relationship that Fernando Viales has with his daughter. Castañón suggests that Mr. Viales’ dedication to Elena’s formation as a scientist constitutes a form of intellectual grooming that parallels sexual grooming: “*Elena Viales*, la joven rica, estudiante de medicina, ha sido educada, modelada por su padre, don Fernando, como una obra de arte de la mentalidad emancipada; es una hija dizque superior a cualquier hombre y prometida implícitamente al incesto” (220). Castañón’s invocation of incest is supported by the way that Elena and Gabriel’s relationship ends. In a key moment coming late in the novel, Elena’s father approaches Gabriel and invites him, explicitly, to have sex with his daughter. However, he requests that Gabriel refrain from asking Elena for her hand in marriage. He tells Gabriel that the capacity for even partial happiness, for even rudimentary usefulness, that he has instilled in Elena is not yet so ingrained in her that it could not be sabotaged by the sensibilities that marriage and the reproductive duties entailed by the institution imply.

This scene hints at the fetish of cuckoldry, which is treated throughout *La ruta de su evasión* as a sadistic rather than a masochistic perversion. For instance, earlier in the novel, Gabriel’s own father, realizing that his friend Esteban and wife Teresa are

in love, invites Esteban to visit the household on a weekly basis to hold talking dates with Teresa. The dates are proposed as a type of conversation therapy for Teresa. By speaking regularly with Esteban, whom Don Vasco judges to be level-headed, free of any neurosis, the neurotic Teresa should learn confidence and psychic poise. Of course, the subtext of this invitation is that Gabriel's father wishes to torture both parties by forcing them into poignant proximity. We shouldn't consider that this act has any masochistic overtones because Don Vasco feels no love for his wife and is not jealous of his friend. Moreover, he can be confident that by lending their conversation his seal of approval, it will be neutralized; and in fact, the neutralization of Esteban's conversation is symbolically echoed in his eventual exile from Costa Rica. Similarly, when Elena's father invites Gabriel to have sex with his daughter, the stipulation that the relationship should have only a recreational aim ironically ensures that it can never become a source of true *jouissance*. Elena, far from occupying a space of productive struggle, dwells in a netherworld of perfected, penetrating but ultimately sterile and sterilizing physical and conversational intercourse.

Consequences of Language Violence

We have now witnessed two scenes of verbal violence. In the first, the character Gabriel proffers a critical direct discourse about his father without developing a corresponding interior monologue. This results in his self-betrayal and in an anti-pedagogic disciplinary action enacted by the father. In the second, the character Elena Viales draws Gabriel's interior monologue out from him or exposes it before him,

with monstrous surgical precision. Both these instances represent dysfunctional forms of discourse on a formal level as they work to de-sequence the temporality, spatiality and subjectivity of discourse that makes it productive. Here thought does not precede discourse, speech can exist outside of the speaker before it has to be found within, and an aggressor can impose herself between another person and his own speech.

However, the dysfunctionality of Gabriel's discourse is also proven by his ultimate destiny in the novel. In the end, he sets up house with one of his family's domestic servants, Aurora. Yet this is not a proper elopement. The unmarried, cohabiting couple does not pretend to carry out the typical, productive operations that would sustain a household and that, in the absence of a formal contract of marriage, most fully signify defiance. Only Aurora works. Gabriel, meanwhile, disappears into a reverie in which there resounds a single utterance: the Aztec word *Tzintzuntzan*. The word is not supplied with any referent inside the diegesis. Extra-diegetically it is the name of a Michoacán town and the name of an Aztec hummingbird deity (Urbano: 202). But these facts are not provided by the text of the novel: "Que quiere decir esta palabra que se me mete ahora en el pensamiento? ... Averiguaré qué quiere decir. Más tarde"

(314).²⁵ In the text, the phrase is a sort of artifact discourse, part of a verbal landscape rather than a proper discourse. Gabriel repeats this word seventy-four times before

²⁵ Gabriel promises repeatedly to look the word up but never does. This fact suggests and underscores the idea that the folkloric is displaced from the present. It is relegated to an archive constructed in the past and is accessible only in a future that, at least for Gabriel, doesn't exist.

Aurora finally concedes to shoot him in the head. Gabriel, before death, becomes a sort of *costumbrista*, a solipsistic appropriator of local color. Here, in the end, Oreamuno tips her hat at her folklorist contemporaries, maybe throwing them a bone or maybe making fun.

CHAPTER 1
AFTERWARD
SERGIO RAMIREZ QUOTES YOLANDA OREAMUNO

Sabía ponerse siempre en singular, ser ella. Desde muy niña, me decía, se afligía al imaginar que podría llegar a ser una mujer insignificante, perdida en la chatura del ambiente, ser parte del plural, extraviarse en los vericuetos de la medianía. Por eso mismo firmaba con una A las dedicatorias de sus libros, sus cartas, las acuarelas y óleos de pequeño formato que pintó. La A de Amanda, pero también la primera letra del alfabeto. (171)

- Marina Carmona in Sergio Ramírez's *La fugitiva*

In *La Fugitiva* Sergio Ramírez calls Yolanda Oreamuno, Amanda Solano. He replaces *Yo* with *Am*. Yolanda used to sign her work with her initials, which happen to spell out both the first syllable of her first name, and the Spanish first person singular pronoun, *yo*. A bold gesture by a female writer prioritizing her own ego. Ramírez translates this prefix as Am, or Ama. A is the first letter in the alphabet. Am is the English first person singular conjugation of the verb *to be*. Ama is the Spanish third person singular conjugation of the verb *to love* in Spanish. A frequent criticism of *La Fugitiva* is that it only gives voice to those who knew Yolanda, *Amanda*, Oreamuno, *Solano* and never to the woman herself. But at the moment that Ramírez translates her name he quotes her.

The last page of the novel proffers a disclaimer, “Esta novela es una obra de ficción. Todos los personajes y situaciones han sido inventados y se deben a la imaginación del autor”, which Stephen Henighan cites when he calls, “the relationship between history and fiction in *La fugitiva* ... problematic.” But, as in the case of *testimonio*, this relationship is once again not *complicated*. Ramírez’s disclaimer is not

a theoretically informed reflection on the way that diegetic fiction, in describing its subject, changes it. It is a relatively strait forward speech act: With it the author preemptively dismisses any legal charge that might be brought against him for injuring a real person, or their descendants.

Ramírez has good reason to be concerned. In 1992, he was sued by Ramiro Gurdian for defaming the Gurdian family in his novel *Castigo Divino*, which had been produced as a *telenovela* in Colombia and has been *proximadamente para salir* in Nicaragua before the claim. *Castigo Divino* tells the story of Oliverio Casteneda, a law student who seduced three, and may have murdered two Nicaraguan debutantes in the 1930s. Ramírez's novel is, like many *novelas policíacas*, an indictment of positivism. Castaneda is either a coldblooded Don Juan, or, potentially, a victim of a civil conspiracy. Gurdian was a descendent of one of the families whose daughter, and honor, was skewered by Casteneda. Gurdian, an *hacendero* referred to euphemistically as a “businessman” throughout the 1980s by the New York Times, had also organized anti-Sandinista protests from the US while Ramírez was vice-president.²⁶

Still, Sergio Ramírez addresses the mendacity of the novel, and specifically, the Latin American novel, in two long essays: *Mentiras verdaderas* (2001) and *El viejo arte de mentir* (2004); which he samples in his monograph, *Señor de los tristes, Sobre Escritores y Escrituras* (2006).²⁷ Taking his cue from Mario Vargas Llosa,

²⁶ See Stephen Kinzer's “Managua Journal; At Home, the Sandinistas Face a Businesslike Foe” in the New York Times, Published: July 29, 1988

²⁷ Ramírez, Sergio. *Señor de los tristes : Sobre Escritores Y Escritura*. San Juan, P.R.: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico , 2006.

Ramírez says that diegetic fiction is unnatural to Latin America. Consequently, Latin America remains partial to “la Historia con mayúscula”, a kind of diegetic fiction that would replace the *crónica* or the *nueva historia* in republican Latin America, after novels were decriminalized.²⁸ This is “Historia (que) se vuelve dramática para las vidas privadas cuando es capaz de afectarlas, quiéranlo o no los protagonistas, que se ven obligados a moverse, y a cambiar sus destinos, no como ellos quisieran, sino como el *phatos* de la vida pública quiere.” (73)²⁹

Here, Ramírez is also clearly in dialogue with Mario Vargas Llosa, who, in his 1998 essay, *La verdad de las mentiras*, affirmed that people write and read novels so that they can live the lives that they are not reconciled to not having lived.³⁰ But Ramírez further proposing that the novel appears in Latin America at a relatively late date not as a kind of text that imagines an alternative private life for people, but as one

²⁸ Although Ramírez doesn’t say it, it is clear that he is informed by Vargas Llosa, who described colonial Latin America as a world devoid of diegetic fiction: “Los inquisidores españoles ... prohibieron que se publicaran o importaran novelas en las colonias hispanoamericanas con el argumento de que esos libros disparatados y absurdos —es decir, mentirosos— podían ser perjudiciales para la salud espiritual de los indios. Por esta razón, los hispanoamericanos sólo leyeron ficciones de contrabando durante trescientos años y la primera novela que, con tal nombre, se publicó en la América española apareció sólo después de la independencia (en México, en 1816). Al prohibir no unas obras determinadas sino un género literario en abstracto, el Santo Oficio estableció algo que a sus ojos era una ley sin excepciones: que las novelas siempre mienten, que todas ellas ofrecen una visión falaz de la vida. Hace años escribí un trabajo ridiculizando a esos arbitrarios, capaces de una generalización semejante. Ahora pienso que los inquisidores españoles fueron acaso los primeros en entender” (Vargas Llosa, *La Verdad de las mentiras*).

²⁹ This sentence appears originally in *Mentiras Verdaderas* and then is sampled, in a different context, in *Señor de los tristes*. The difference is that in *Mentiras Verdaderas* Ramírez compares imaginative fiction with fantastic fiction. This distinction, apparently, is less important to him in the latter text.

³⁰ “(Las novelas) se escriben y se leen para que los seres humanos tengan las vidas que no se resignan a no tener.” (Vargas Llosa)

that defines private life, by demonstrating how an interrupting *phatos*³¹, or *being spoken*, frustrates or radically affirms it. Examples of frustrations abound: Revolution, Migration and Persecution *ad nauseum*. Examples of affirmations are more ephemeral and therefore more intriguing to speculate about (Ramírez doesn't give specific examples): perhaps *la novela de dictador* is one, because in it, all of the ascendant politician's desires are fulfilled, although usually, with unforeseen consequences.

In either case, Ramírez says, the pressure exerted on, or the removal of pressure from the volition of characters, inside of an historical context, defines the novel form in Latin America.

Sometimes there is a fine line between appropriation and accident. Literary critics writing about *La Fugitiva* have used the same words as those writing about Mario Vargas Llosa's *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*, which is the topic of *Chapter III*. Specifically, the word *paraíso*. Nathalie Besse: "Al leer esta novela nos percatamos de que Amanda Solano cristaliza elementos de la vida y de la personalidad del mismo Sergio Ramírez, es decir que aquel tiempo huido en busca del cual sale el escritor puede ser *su* propio paraíso perdido: el de las grandes aspiraciones sociales ... la «utopía compartida» (Ramírez 1999: 14)."

This is very similar to what Efraín Kristal writes about the concept of paradise and the way that characters in *El Paraíso* reflect elements of Vargas Llosa's failures: "In *The Way to Paradise*", (Vargas Llosa) presents his fanatical protagonists with ...

³¹ From the Greek *phemi*. See page 189 of Joseph H Greenberg's *Universals of Human Language*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1978.

greater empathy and less distance from his own ... political experiences. Indeed, there is a clear parallel between Vargas Llosa's fictional account of Flora Tristán's courageous but failed attempt to launch a political movement ... and his autobiographical account, *A Fish in the Water* (*El pez en el agua*, 1993) (Kristal, 135; See also 137 for details).³²

But extant criticism on *El Paraíso* did not necessarily influence criticism on *La fugitiva*. Ramírez begins his own novel with an epigraph by Proust that invokes paradise: "Los verdaderos paraísos son los paraísos que hemos perdido. *El tiempo recobrado*". And Ramírez's situation is, superficially, very similar to that of Vargas Llosa. Both lost the election for the presidency of their respective countries prior to writing these novels. Both authored political memoirs to process their losses: Ramírez's is titled *Adiós Muchachos* (1999). And both *Paraíso* and *Fugitiva* take a step back from Peru or Nicaragua, and represent foreign milieus: France and Costa Rica.

In this criticism, which evokes criticism on *El paraíso en la otra esquina*, Ramírez's readers cope with, try to explain, the absence of a beloved character from *La Fugitiva*: Nicaragua. When *La Fugitiva* was published, some readers were alienated by what they perceived as Ramírez's retreat from Nicaraguan politics: "(La Fugitiva's) emphasis on Costa Rican history attracted adverse commentary. Defending this trait of the novel in an interview ... Ramírez stated: "El lector debe disponer de

³² Sabine Koelman concurs with both Dieter Oelker and Efraín Kristal: "*El Paraíso* is not only a fictionalized double biography but also an "autobiographical fiction" (for Vargas Llosa) representing the various facets of the 'Utopian desire' and its frustrations." (Koelman, 245)

elementos fundamentales de la historia de Costa Rica. No es un paisaje abstracto. (Henighan, 170)³³ Readers conflate the trajectory of the narrator with that of the Nicaraguan dissident, who time and time again, retreats to Costa Rica.

In his own perspicacious reading of *La Fugitiva*, Henighan argues that Nicaragua is still here: The novel is constructed as a biography inside of an autobiography, allowing Ramírez to stage an intimate confrontation between Nicaraguan and Costa Rican identity. The narrator *is* Sergio Ramírez, a famous author who has written a novel titled *Tiempo de fulgor*. When he goes to Costa Rica to interview a girlhood friend of Yolanda Oreamuno, Gloria Tinoco, he recognizes himself in the Nicaraguan domestic worker that staffs her household:

The complicity between these two Nicaraguans who belong to opposite sides of the social gulf cleaved by transnational capital relegates Nicaraguan nationality to the status of a secret code. The woman ... (who) has been transnationalized as cheap labour, and the famous man who appears on television and has been transnationalized as a cultural celebrity, share a husk of national identity that they can admit to one another but that is no longer viable in the public sphere and is looked down upon by their Costa Rican hosts. By the same token the narrator's consecration by television as an authority figure relieves him of the need to retail his past position as a revolutionary leader; his transnational celebrity as a writer reinscribes his masculine identity within the cultural contours of the new millennium. (674)

I would add to Henighan's precise reading of this encounter, that it is intensified by the *apriori* status of the domestic worker in Gloria Tinoco's home. Tinoco echoing

³³ Also see Juan Murrillo: Se echa de menos en esta novela, considerando la licencia artística que asume Ramírez, que no se escuche la propia voz de Yolanda Oreamuno, o más aún, su interioridad como ella misma lo hiciera magistralmente con sus propios personajes de novela. Tampoco se explora su faceta de escritora que es, finalmente, el mérito en el que debería descansar su fama. (670, partially cited by Stephen Henighan)

Oreamuno writing sarcastically about Costa Rican *hospitalidad* (see *Chapter 1*) tells Ramírez: “Usted ya sabe, por todo el tiempo que vivió en Costa Rica, que casi nunca nos prestamos para invitaciones sociales; somos poco para eso, y por eso nos critican los demás centroamericanos, ¿no es cierto?” (22) Her insistence on the Costa Rican home as a space reserved for family butts up against the ubiquitous presence of the foreign woman.³⁴

But, while it is true that, through the figure of the maid, Nicaragua becomes a subject of *La fugitiva*, it is not true that, as Henighan has claimed, *La fugitiva* has an “announced ideology” which is “(a) transnational identity, that of liberal feminism” (669). This is never a subject for Ramírez, whose novel actually evinces the sardonic sexual identity politics of Oreamuno. *La fugitiva* belies its own publicity: which suggests that it is an exploration of the writer’s life, which was more laden with tension than her writing.

The three witnesses:

³⁴ Henighan also clarifies that Nicaraguan identity is reintroduced at the end of Ramírez’s narrative, with the introduction of a character named Salomón de la Selva, who is based on the Nicaraguan poet. One of Sergio Ramírez’s few blatant conceits as a novelist is to imagine that Oreamuno and Salomón de la Selva were lovers in Mexico City, and that de la Selva paid for her burial when she died. While the two did coincide in Mexico City, they never met. But Henighan claims that Salomón de la Selva’s introduction underscores the idea that “future Central American artists who hope to establish themselves will need to do so under the rubric of being “Mexicans.” This theme dominates the final pages, displacing the liberal-feminist claims of a woman’s right to independence that are *La fugitiva*’s announced ideology” (678).

In *La Fugitiva*, Sergio Ramírez dialogues with three women, characters who bear a supersensuous resemblance to extra-diegetic subjects who positioned themselves very differently in relationship to a feminine Tican diaspora.

Gloria Tinoco is a pseudonym for Vera Tinoco Rodríguez, who was Yolanda's classmate at El Colegio Superior de Señoritas, and later married into the family of two-time Costa Rican president Rafael Yglesias y Castro. Tinoco is, herself, doubly *Tican*. She was born in Costa Rica, left briefly in her late teens, and then returned, rejecting the trajectory of her classmates, who repatriated to Mexico or Guatemala or who completed advanced degrees in the United States and Europe. Her opinions about Oreamuno, and the path she chose for herself, stand in for those of Costa Rica. Costa Rican literary critics praised Ramírez's portrayal of Tinoco, noting the linguistic authenticity of her speech; *Ti(no)co* actually sounds *tica*.

Marina Carmona is a pseudonym for Lilia Ramos, who should be remembered along with Gabriela Mistral and Rosario Castellanos, as a revolutionary figure in 20th century Latin American pedagogy. She founded Costa Rica's first school for parents, brought braille to Central America and studied psychoanalysis under Jean Piaget at the *Sobornne*. She wrote revolutionary literature for children, and her memoirs served as a resource for Victoria Urbano, Rima de Valbonha and finally Sergio Ramírez, writing about Oreamuno.³⁵ In *La fugitiva*, Ramírez converses with Carmona in La Biblioteca Nacional, where he says she remains like a book on the shelves, "tras su jubilación le

³⁵ Chief among them: Ramos, Lilia. *Fulgores En Mi Ocaso*. San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Costa Rica, 1978.

permitieron quedarse en su cubículo de siempre, como el incunable de una biblioteca donde no los hay” (136).

Finally, Manuela Torres is a pseudonym for Chavela Vargas, who expatriated from Costa Rica to Mexico and achieved global fame as a singer of *rancheras*. Ramírez interviews his subject in her Mexico City flat, where she has grown old in the company of her xoloitzcuintlin, evincing the image of an artist who came to embody *mexicanidad* more than almost any Mexican woman.

Ramírez introduces narrative tension to his three part testimony by introducing rivalry into the relationship between his witnesses. The possibility of imagining Tinoco, Carmona, and Torres as members of a community of twentieth century female Tican intellectuals is undermined by the way that their own imaginations have splintered around the figure of Amanda, and by the fact that each woman who speaks, holds the last woman who spoke, in contempt. This rivalry, however, is not unproductively stereotypically feminine. It allows Ramírez to critique the narrative styles that he is sampling, as insufficient defaults for talking about women.

For example, Ramírez frames Tinoco’s testimony as an epistolary novel. This allows Tinoco to make confessions more indirectly. Then, in the next testimony, Carmona expresses disdain for what she calls Tinoco’s false modesty. Ramírez dialogues with Carmona as she gives her own testimony, and challenges her claims, which she makes with academic certainty about Amanda. Then, in the next testimony, Torres, disdains Carmona for being an academic. There is no one to disdain Torres’s discourse. But Ramírez subtly critiques Torres for overly-perfecting a performance of *mexicanidad*, that is caricaturesque.

Contempt in testimony

The first woman to speak is Gloria Tinoco. She was educated with Amanda at el Colegio Superior de Señoritas, where she encountered, Esther de Mezzerville, the French-Guatemalan educational reformer who adapted the theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi within a feminist framework. Later she was a member of el Círculo de Amigos de Arte, where, like Amanda, she encountered Joaquín García Monge, the editor of *Repertorio Americano*. But in Ramírez's novel, Tinoco has supplanted the radical education that both she and Amanda received with gossip about the men that they encountered in these institutions. This is comically illustrated by Tinoco's summary of her and Amanda's political education: "Además de los profesores que ya dije ... estaba también un muchacho muy guapo, que no puedo acordarme del nombre, de una familia libanesa muy rica de Guayaquil, exiliado en San José por alborotos políticos, que nos daba no sé qué histórico. ¿Cómo se llamaba eso del desarrollo comunista y toda esa cosa...? Materialismo histórico." (68)

It would be easy to conclude that Ramírez uses Tinoco's testimony to parody the historical material consciousness of female scholars as recreational. But we can also choose to ignore Ramírez's unknown intentions, and observe that, just as it is given, this testimony flattens out the influence of legitimate male authorities, i.e. Joaquín García Monge, with those of men who became accidental antagonists in the lives of Tinoco and Amanda. For instance, Tinoco punctuates her account of Amanda's circulation within Amigos de Arte with an anecdote about how she was

kidnapped by her then boyfriend, who Ramírez names Roberto Goicoechea. (Rima Valbonha also references this event, calling the kidnapping a “rapto sin consecuencia.” But Valbonha doesn’t name names. (7)) Tinoco says that the kidnapping was executed as revenge on Amanda, who offended Goicoechea by appearing in a bathing suit in the magazine *La Hora*. This episode



Yolanda Oreamuno appears in *La Hora* in her bathing suit. The caption reads:

Yolanda Oreamuno, arquetipo de belleza perfecta, mide exactas las medidas de Miss Universo”.³⁶

suggests an equivalence between the men who became intellectual influences in Amanda’s life, and the men who interrupted her life.

When Marina Carmona’s testimony begins, she shifts the focus of the narrative from the accidents (men) that figured in Amanda’s life, to the way that Amanda

³⁶ Mora, Alexander Sánchez. Tras el mito de Yolanda Oreamuno. <http://www.nacion.com/ancora/2008/abril/06/ancora1483490.html>

processed these events in her fiction. Much of Carmona's testimony is subvocalization: She reads aloud from Amanda's letters, articles and also from her novel, *La puerta cerrada*, which is *La ruta de su evasión*. "He leído todo lo que se puede leer acerca de Amanda, buscando cómo explicármela más allá del conocimiento personal ... he llegado a la conclusión ... de que muchas claves autobiográficas, y de identidad, se encuentran en sus propias ficciones." (179)³⁷ As evidence, she analyzes a scene from *La puerta cerrada*, which has actually been adapted from *La ruta de su evasión*.

The adaptation appears on page 180. What Ramírez has done is rewrite a passage from *La ruta de su evasión* in which the character Aurora remembers an episode from her childhood in which she interrupted her mother and father during sex. Her mother was mortified, but her father was calm and comforting. As a result, she came to disdain her mother, and to believe that her father, and men in general, were incarnations of a sublime and superior race. Ramírez does not transcribe this passage word for word, but preserves the central ideas in it: "Mientras tanto, el padre, entidad suprema feliz y segura ... se asienta en la firme conciencia pagana, libre de secretos y temores" (181).

Carmona tells Ramírez that this passage is not autobiographical in the most obvious sense of the word: Amanda didn't know her father, because he died, and she

³⁷ Sergio Ramírez also has Maria Carmona ask a question that the Real Victoria Urbano asked, and that I quoted in *Chapter I*: "Cómo podían hablar de su primera novela, que nadie leyó, porque nunca se publicó?" (130)

didn't deify her stepfather, because he tried to rape her. But Carmona tells us that Aurora's aesthetic, and worship of masculinity was shared by Amanda. (178)

However, Ramírez pushes Carmona to recognize the limits of the knowledge that the archive has supplied her with. When Carmona denies that Amanda's first husband Jorge Calvo Wood infected Amanda with syphilis, and presents Ramírez with a letter in which Amanda claims to be living in marital bliss with Wood in Chile, Ramírez responds by sharing a letter that Amanda wrote to Tinoco in which she called her marriage to Wood a living hell, and alludes to the virus: "desespero de que el veneno haya penetrado mi sangre." (177) Carmona's response betrays her jealousy of Tinoco's relationship with Amanda: Ramírez speaking: "(Carmona) me responde que no cometerá la indelicadeza de preguntarme quién es la corresponsal, aunque puede sospecharlo." (177)

This interpretation of Amanda's prose is undoubtedly more informed by Oreamuno's writing than anything that Lilia Ramos, or even Victoria Urbano or Rima Valbonha, wrote about Oreamuno. Because Ramos, Urbano and Valbonha, who frequently quoted one another, and whose criticism consequently bleeds together, were reluctant to consider the significance of Oreamuno's female characters' deification of men: I have already established in *Chapter 1*, that they privileged Aurora's role in *La ruta de su evasión* over Elena Viales's. They also neglected this aspect of Aurora's psychology.

Finally, Manuela Torres' vision of Amanda is radically anti-textual. She says that she never read anything that Amanda wrote: "Nunca leí nada escrito por Amanda" (289). Instead, she claims a purer love for Amanda than that which animates Tinoco

and Carmona's memories: "La Amanda que yo conocí, a la que yo deseé sin fortuna, no era la escritora. Era una diosa, que es mucho más que escritora." (289) Here, Torres suggests, carnal approximation to the subject is pure, while textual approximations are polluted by the messiness of hermeneutics.³⁸

Torres regards Carmona with utter disdain. Throughout her testimony she refers to her as *the ugly woman*: "¿Quién recuerda (a Yolanda) como escritora? Una lista de gente que encabeza la fea" (289). She sees Carmona's commitment to an imagined literary history for women as decadent, a leisure activity that she participates in because she isn't desirable enough to be included in the labor of actually loving other women. The only women that Torres, nurtured by the prose of Juan Rulfo, says that she feels an affinity with, are those who have died or will die on Mexican soil. Amanda Solano is one. Edith Mora, who witnessed Amanda's death, is another.³⁹

Ramírez uses Torres's disavowal of Amanda as a writer, and her professed ignorance of Amanda's texts to assert that his narrative hinges, radically, upon the contingency of the philological record. He does this via quotation, putting Oreamuno's words in Torres's mouth. Torres says, "Cada vez que he regresado a Costa Rica ha

³⁸ As Stephen Henighan has detailed. With Torres, who is based on the infamous womanizer Chavela Vargas, Ramírez has an opportunity to parody the trajectory that Proust's Marcel takes in *La Fugitive*, as he rediscovers his deceased lover, Albertine, through her affairs with women. But, Amanda not only resisted Torres' advances; according to Torres herself, she was indifferent to them: "Fue parte de mi vida. Lo fue, aunque yo no haya sido parte de la suya, ni modo" (289).

³⁹ Torres contradicts rumors that either Amanda or Edith committed suicide. She maintains Edith died of hunger: "El hambre va quitando la voluntad de vivir, te afea el ánimo, te lo rebaja, te predispone a resbalarte y caer de cabeza en una bañera llena de agua herviente. Más si lo único que tienes para engañarla es tequila del más grosero" (227). Relating her theory in the second person, Torres romanticizes scarcity tinted by luxury, as part of a Mexican aesthetic of death. Ramírez's portrayal of Torres here appears almost caricaturistic.

sido para arrepentirme una y otra vez. Qué país. La ley del serrucho. Si te alzas más alto que los demás pendejos, no te serruchan el piso, te serruchan las piernas para dejarte al mismo nivel” (232).

Ostensibly, Torres is speaking of her native Costa Rica, where she remains unrecognized as a singer due to her status as a *tortillera* (dyke). However, this statement is immediately recognizable as an adaptation of the proverbial statement made by Yolanda Oreamuno about Costa Rican society in 1939 that I discussed in Chapter 1: “ Al que pretende levantar demasiado la cabeza sobre el nivel general, no se la corta. ... Le bajan suavemente el suelo que pisa, y despacio, sin violencia, se le coloca a la altura conveniente”. This is the moment to which the novel builds, a moment in which a character makes an original statement, that is in fact a quotation from a text that she has never read. It is a moment that allows the non human artifact of Oreamuno’s novel, to impress itself onto a new diegesis. This effect is redoubled in a final quotational instance:

After Yolanda Oreamuno’s first husband, Jorge Wood, committed suicide she was forced to return to Costa Rica.⁴⁰ There, while married to the economist Oscar Barahona Streber, and before becoming pregnant, she wrote her prize winning lost novel, *Por Tierra Firme*. Both Victoria Urbano and, now, Marina Carmona (in *La fugitiva*) have suggest that we have no information about what this novel included. However, Manuela Torres affirms that it, like a third novel that Amanda was drafting

⁴⁰ Ramírez’s narrator, Marina Carmona, says that the culminating scene of *La ruta de su evasión*, in which Gabriel lays his head on Aurora’s lap and shoots himself, is semiautobiographical, although she doubts Amanda was an eyewitness to the actual event.

at the time of her death, *Casta sombría*, included: “la historia de una niña violada por su padrastro, y que entra en conflicto con la madre cuando la madre se pone contra ella y toma el partido del violador. Su propia historia, por lo que ves” (83). So Manuela Torres, the character who has read nothing, is able to cite a novel that no one has read. This instant also allows the non human artifact to impress itself onto the diegesis. Only this time, it is an artifact that is arriving from somewhere beyond the archive.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR BOTH CHAPTER 1 AND ITS AFTERWARD

Asher, James J. "The Total Physical Response Approach to Second Language Learning." *The Modern Language Journal* 53.1 (1969): 3-17.

Bermúdez, Manuel. "Sergio Ramírez: Confesiones sobre Amanda." *Semanario Universidad*. 15 Jun. 2015. Web. 7 of Jul. 2014. <
<http://www.semanariouniversidad.ucr.cr/component/content/article/1235-Los%20Libros/3964-sergio-ramirez-confesiones-sobre-amanda.html> >

Blanco, John D. *Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Bonilla, Abelardo. "Yolanda Oreamuno." *A lo largo del corto camino*. Ed. Lilia Ramos. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1961. 353 – 357.

Castañón, Adolfo. *América sintaxis*. México, D.F: Siglo XXI Editores, 2009.

Craig, Herbert E. *Marcel Proust and Spanish America: From Critical Response to Narrative Dialogue*. Lewisburg Pa: Bucknell University Press, 2002.

De la Campa, Román. *Latin Americanism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Dobles, Fabián. "Defensa y realidad de una literatura." *A lo largo del corto camino*. Ed. Lilia Ramos. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1961. 321 -327.

Gold, Janet. "Feminine Space and the Discourse of Silence: Yolanda Oreamuno, Elena Poniatowska, and Luisa Valenzuela." Ed. Noel M, and Carol Maier. *In the feminine Mode: Essays on Hispanic Women Writers*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1990. 195 – 203.

- "Yolanda Oreamuno" *Rereading the Spanish American Essay: Translations of 19th and 20th Century Women's Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. 215 – 216.

González, Ann B. *Sí Pero No: Fabián Dobles and the Postcolonial Challenge*. Madison N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005.

González, Echevarría R. *Cuban Fiestas*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.
Huey, Edmund B. *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading: With a Review of the History of Reading and Writing and of Methods, Texts, and Hygiene in Reading*. Cambridge Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1968.

Greenberg, Joseph H, Charles A. Ferguson, and Edith A. Moravcsik. *Universals of Human Language*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1978.

Henighan, Stephen. *Sandino's Nation : Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez Writing Nicaragua, 1940-2012*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.

Kinzer, Stephen. "Managua Journal; At Home, the Sandinistas Face a Businesslike Foe". *New York Times*. Published: July 29, 1988.

Köllmann, Sabine. *A Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. , 2014.

Mañach, Jorge. *Indagación del choteo*. Barcelona: Linkgua-Digital: Red Ediciones S.L., 2011.

Martínez S., Luz Ivette. "Carmen Naranjo y la narrativa femenina en Costa Rica." San José: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana 1987.

McGuigan, F.J. "Cognitive Psychophysiology." Ed. Raymond J. Corsini. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*. New York: Wiley, 1994. 187 – 191.

Menton, Seymour. *El cuento costarricense: estudio, antología Y bibliografía*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1964.

Morse, Richard M. "The Multiverse of Latin American identity." *Ideas and Ideologies in Twentieth Century Latin America*. Ed. Leslie Bethell. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 1 – 129.

Oreamuno, Yolanda. "40° sobre cero." *A lo largo del corto camino*. Ed. Lilia Ramos. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1961. 137 – 143.

- "El ambiente tico y los mitos tropicales." *A lo largo del corto camino*. Ed. Lilia Ramos. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1961. 15 – 27.

- "Protesta contra el folklore." *A lo largo del corto camino*. Ed. Lilia Ramos. San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1961. 93 – 99.

- *La Ruta De Su Evasión*. San José: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1970.

Ramírez, Sergio. *La fugitiva*. Madrid: Alfaguara, 2011.

Ramos, Lilia. "Sin noviciado, Yolanda Oreamuno escribe libros psicoanalíticos." *Repertorio Americano*. San José de Costa Rica, C.A.: J. García Monge, V. 46 1950. 185 – 188.

Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985.

Urbano, Victoria. *Una escritora costarricense: Yolanda Oreamuno*. Madrid: Ediciones Castilla de Oro, 1968.

Vallbona, Rima , and Yolanda Oreamuno. *Yolanda Oreamuno: Presentada Por Rima De Vallbona*. San José, Costa Rica: Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes, Departamento de Publicaciones, 1972.

CHAPTER 2

THE BAD NEWS:

GOSSIP BEFORE THE CHILD CRUCIFICTION

Sedition and human sacrifice are the events that Rosario Castellanos's *Oficio de tinieblas* immortalizes. The novel weaves together the stories of citizens of Ciudad Real and San Juan Chamula, centers of Ladino and Tzotzil political power, and culminates in a regional war representing the Caste Wars that took place in Chiapas during the last half of the 19th century.

In Ciudad Real, sedition takes the form of resistance against federally mandated agrarian and educational reforms. Specifically, the establishment of *ejidos* and of free, secular schools for Indigenous children. In this context, sedition employs as its chief apparatus, gossip: A rumor mill that is always already in place and that normally functions as a weapon of domestic terror, but that can be appropriated in an instant of political crisis as a weapon of political terror. In *Oficio de tinieblas*, it is gossip, turned against representatives of the federal government, that neutralizes the individuals who are potentially able to effect reform in the region. Notably, this gossip remains familiar even as its breadth of impact expands to include political figures. At its heart are salacious details regarding sex, family composition and religiosity.

Meanwhile, in San Juan Chamula, Tzotzil Indians crucify a nine-year-old boy, Domingo Díaz Puiljá. (The real crucified child was named Domingo Gómez Checheb, and he was killed on Good Friday in 1868.) This violence is verbally conjured by the

boy's adoptive mother, Catalina Díaz Puiljá, who is the leader of a spontaneously emerging animist cult, The Cult of the Stones. During holy week, Catalina gives a speech in which she calls for the creation of an Indian Christ that will go to battle against the Christ of the Europeans and make the Tzotzil invincible.

There is both a gap and a curious confluence between these phenomena: sedition and human sacrifice. A rumor mill propels the narrative up to the moment of the novel's violent climax, increasing narrative tension. However, this mill does not produce the event of the crucifixion. Nor does the event of the crucifixion ever become a referent for gossip.⁴¹

Instead, at the time of the crucifixion, the rumor mill ceases to turn. The Ladino community enjoys a moment in which gossip is suspended. This moment should be understood as a different sort of state of emergency. It takes place beyond the rule of law that gossip, described by the novel as a functional speech act, constitutes.

It is a moment of singular importance in the diegetic universe that Castellanos constructs over the course of half a dozen novels and short story collections, because it belies the ostensible project of her oeuvre to carry out a regional anthropology and construct a qualified apology for societal norms and practices in Chiapas.

El ciclo de Chiapas, el ciclo de chismes

⁴¹ This represents a significant transformation of this event, since, historiographically, the crucifixion of the historical person,

Oficio de tinieblas, written over the course of 15 years and published in 1962, launches a diegetic space that compresses events spanning a century of national and regional history. The novel represents two sets of events as occurring simultaneously: The first includes political developments that we readily identify with the 1930s, which saw the introduction of Cardenista reforms to the region. Federally sanctioned civil servants arrive in Chiapas and attempt to establish land-reform as well as free, mandatory education as provided for by Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917. They form an unstable alliance with their indigenous counterparts, municipally sanctioned Tzotzil civil servants. At the same time, they are frustrated by an economically depressed land-owning class and its transitory allies: Church officials who struggle to redefine their mission in Chiapas in the wake of an institutional anticlericism also engendered by the Constitution of 1917. The second set of events includes action specific to the Caste Wars of the previous century – a fifty year war of resistance waged by the indigenous population against urban centers of Ladino power - and especially the Chamula revolution of 1887. These include the seemingly spontaneous emergence of the Cult of Stones near Chamula in 1886, and the apocryphal crucifixion of a child by Tzotzil Indians in the region, which occurred later that same year.

Most scholars describe this alternative, synthetic history in one of two ways: Either Castellanos represents nineteenth century events as taking place in the twentieth century, or she represents twentieth century events as taking place in the nineteenth.

These descriptions are binarily opposed and create inequality between historic strata, with the base strata, the time period *into which* events are being moved for narration, implicitly receiving privilege. For instance, the Cambridge Companion to

the Latin American Novel states: “*Oficio de tinieblas* centers on an indigenous rebellion in the mid-nineteenth century. Castellanos transfers this history to the 1930s.” (Gollnick, 56) Gollnick then goes on to describe political phenomena from the 1930s. In this articulation, the privileged position of the base strata is connoted by the amount of attention that it receives, in the form of intellectual labor, from scholars who identify it on the basis of myriad characteristic political phenomena, including Cardenismo, post revolutionary or late revolutionary constitutionalism and anticlericism.

On the other hand, the singular events of the Cult of the Stones and child crucifixion, despite being more concrete, are rendered transparent, as scholars treat these as mere artifacts, that can be moved in time and space. On the basis of the artifact status of these events, scholars naturalize, and thus underprivilege them, even as they frequently become the explicit, salacious subject of scholarship.⁴²

One explicit goal of this chapter, then, is to denaturalize the singular events that the novel appropriates, the emergence of the cult of the stones and the crucifixion of the child, and to consider their phenomenological constitution as part of a dialectic, that includes the representation of early twentieth century history.

A second problem that scholars face when thinking about *Oficio de tinieblas* is introduced by the fact that the novel compresses not only events from history, but also from a larger, diegetic universe; what has been called Rosario Castellanos’s *Chiapan*

⁴² This is why even more equitable articulations of the temporal situation of the novel – e.g.: “La autora recrea literariamente dos períodos históricos, que superimpone en el mismo eje cronológico” (Gil Iriarte 248) - are problematic. They do not compensate for this imbalance of phenomenological attention.

cycle. To my knowledge, this phrase is first applied in this way in the title of Joseph Sommers's "El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria".⁴³ (Although, previous to this, Sommers uses the phrase to refer to a larger movement of writing by Chiapan authors.⁴⁴) René Prieto demonstrates the use of this phrase to describe a progressive tendency in Castellanos' novels: "Castellanos's Neoindigenista novels follow one another in an ever-improving progression that culminates with the widely acclaimed master-piece of the "Ciclo de Chiapas": *Oficio de tinieblas*" (158).⁴⁵ And finally, Brian Gollnick plays with the phrase in the title of his 1999 monograph "El ciclón de Chiapas."

The use of this phrase has several shifting motivations. By the nineteen-nineties it allows critics to create a verbal association between Rosario Castellanos and *Oficio de tinieblas* and novelists and novels of the Boom, such as Gabriel García Márquez and *Cien años de soledad*, which is stereotypically identified with the so-called *el ciclo de Macondo*. This would be useful in rescuing *Oficio de tinieblas* from the repressive myth of pre-boom literary stagnation. And it also allows critics to smooth over ostensible, and often unfairly attributed, differences in the quality of the books that make up this cycle: These include *Balún canán* (1957) *Ciudad real* (1960)

⁴³ Revista ICACH. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, núm. 14, enero-junio, 1965, pp. 7-22.

⁴⁴ "Sin duda la zona indígena más favorecida por los novelistas es la de Chiapas. Forman este ciclo Juan Pérez Jolote, de Ricardo Pozas; El callado dolor de los tzotziles, de Ramón Rubín; Los hombres verdaderos, de Carlos Antonio Castro; Benzulul, de Eraclio Zepeda; La culebra tapó el río, de María Lombardo de Caso; y Balún Cañan y Oficio de tinieblas, de Rosario Castellanos." Sommers. "The Indian Oriented Novel in Latin America."

⁴⁵ René Prieto, "The Literature of Indigenismo" Ed. Gozales de Echeverría, Roberto & Enrique Pupo-Walker, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, 1996. 158.

⁴⁶ and *Los convidados de agosto* (1963). Put bluntly, *Balún canán*, which has a child protagonist, has never completely thrown off the stigma that is attached to children's literature. *Ciudad real* at times appears overly didactic, especially when it represents the follies of colonialist agents. And *Los convidados de agosto* subtly reframes many of the same existential crises introduced in *Oficio de tinieblas* inside a more domestic, claustrophobic setting that was not widely appealing to boom audiences.

The use of the term cycle is appropriate, despite vested critical interest, as all of these works do comprise a discrete *world* that is recognizable, not only on the basis of its identification with Chiapas but also on the basis of the repetition of certain subjectivities, even if the characters that appear in each of these works are different. One of these reincarnated subjectivities is that of a criolla child who forms her identity through a voyeuristic fascination with other young white women. In *Oficio de tinieblas*, this is Idolina, whose fascination attaches temporarily to her dead mother, and later to her father's mistress, Julia Quevedo. In *Los Convidados de agosto*, this is the anonymous narrator of the novella *Amistades efímeras* whose fascination with her best friend, Gertrudis, borders on erotic.⁴⁷ A second is a ruminative, isolated

⁴⁶ Ciudad Real is often called a short story anthology. However, the vignettes it represents constitute a single diegetic reality lending the work, as a whole, a novelistic quality. The main difference between Ciudad Real and *Oficio de tinieblas*, besides the level of intricacy with which each vignette is connected to the next, seems to be the culmination of each narrative. In Ciudad Real, Castellanos introduces the foreign aide worker and missionary, thus expanding the horizon on which the Chiapan native fails to see his reality corresponded or contested. There is always an absurd suspension of the moment of encounter or contestation. In *Oficio de tinieblas*, Mexico, meaning Mexico City, stands in as the ultimate horizon, the ultimate limit. But still, there is never an encounter or real conflict between the region and the capital.

⁴⁷ This relationship is introduced in the first line of *Amistades Efímeras*, one of the most compelling first lines of any of Castellanos's stories or novels: "La mejor amiga

subjectivity problematically identified with the Mestiza or ladinized woman. In *Ciudad Real*, this subjectivity is typified by the character Modesta Gómez, who suffers anti-Mestiza violence in isolation and only cooperates with other Mestiza women to mob travelling Indian merchants. In *Oficio de tinieblas* it is typified by the young Indian woman Marcela Gómez, an inversion of Modesta Gómez: She bares a similar name, is similarly the victim of sexual violence, and is actually the victim of *atajadoras*. There is thus a great deal of slippage between characters in different works.

This chapter also has the goal, then, of recognizing the significance of this slippage: That its existence, the existence of a *ciclo de Chiapas*, makes it possible for Castellanos to use *Oficio de tinieblas* to define a limit for the kinds of experiences that can be had by her characters in all of her novels, and thus is crucial to defining the existential quality of her *obra* as a whole.

Lessons about gossip from the past

What is the sense in turning to *Oficio de tinieblas* to talk about gossip, as one such experience? This is a preemptive gesture against the application to Latin American literature of currently *en vogue* critical models for applying gossip studies to

de mi adolescencia era casi muda, lo que hizo posible nuestra intimidad. Porque yo estaba poseída por una especie de frenesí que me obligaba a hablar incesantemente, a hacer confidencias y proyectos, a definir mis estados de ánimo, a interpretar mis sueños y recuerdos. No tenía la *menor idea de lo que era ni de lo que iba a ser y me urgía organizarme y formularme, antes que con actos, por medio de las palabras*" (9).

literature. Because the tropes of gossip studies have become monolithic and hegemonic. They include the exploration of gossip as a feminization of speech, or a queering of speech, but most of all they hinge on the qualification of gossip as a mode of resistance.

They can be traced back to 1985, and Patricia Mayer Spacks' book *Gossip* (1985):

(There is a form of) gossip I call "serious," which exists only as a function of intimacy. It takes place in private, at leisure, in a context of trust... Its participants use talk about others to reflect about themselves, to express wonder and uncertainty and locate certainties, to enlarge their knowledge of one another. Such gossip ... may use the stuff of scandal, but its purposes bear little on the world beyond the talkers except inasmuch as that world impinges on them. It proved a resource for the subordinated (anyone can talk; with a trusted listener, anyone can say anything), a crucial means of self-expression, a crucial form of solidarity. (5)

Spacks follows this quotation with an example about women in a harem who "critically analyze ... the world of men" (5). The quotation exemplifies a trend in communications studies that we identify immediately with the 1980s: That of looking for, and finding, instances of "resistance" in superficially passive activities; that of reconfiguring practices of reception as practices of production. But this by no means signifies that scholars of global literature have become exhausted with these tropes. In fact, a quick google search reveals that this passage from *Gossip* has been quoted within the last five years in criticism on the culture of servants in 19th century Brazil (Roncador, Sônia. *Domestic Servants in Literature and Testimony in Brazil, 1889-1999*. , 201) and an anthology of Jane Austen's letters (Austen, Jane, and Vivien Jones. *Selected Letters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Not to mention

several articles. (I became aware of Spacks through the work of Nick Salvato⁴⁸.)

Meanwhile, a culturally informed reading of *Oficio de tinieblas*, and possibly other canonical Latin American novels, does not admit these tropes. This culturally informed reading, however, is not meant as an affront to gossip studies as a field. Instead it suggests that we reconsider some of the original questions that are at the heart of the field.

Gossip studies was confirmed as an authentic discipline in 1963, when Max Gluckman published the paper, “Gossip and Scandal,” in *Current Anthropology*. This paper is most often cited today by scholars who wish to highlight a central controversy in the field; one that most will argue has not been resolved: Whether gossip is the enterprise of a collective (this is Gluckman’s premise) or individuals.⁴⁹ However, today we should also return to “Gossip and Scandal” to witness an unexpected critical gesture that Gluckman carries out. This is the way that Gluckman speaks in the first person and inserts himself into his own anthropology.

After completing a thorough review of the primordial academic literature on gossip from 1927 to the early 1960s – a review that merits consideration in its own right⁵⁰ - Gluckman states his theory of gossip and then relates it to his private life by introducing an ostensibly humorous, but still surprisingly personal anecdote. His theory is that gossip is a privileged form of narration, and that the privilege of

⁴⁸ Salvato, Nick. Editorial Comment: “The Age of Gossip Dom.” *Modern Drama*. 53:289-296. 2010

⁴⁹ For a review of this controversy, as well as a general overview of the field, see Eric K. Foster’s “Research on Gossip: Taxonomy, Methods, and Future Directions.” *Review of General Psychology*, Educational Publishing Foundation 2004, Vol. 8, No. 2, 78–9

gossiping is concentrated at the political center or centers of a special group, which works to exclude others from gaining the literacy required to decode its rumors. This is a theory of gossip, as a functional phenomenon. His anecdote, which also tells us all we need to know about Gluckman's class, and race status, is as follows:

When it came to riding, I was never able to acquire the gossip among those who rode even in the small circles of Johannesburg-and I always felt lost in the group. I was glad when the time came for me to slink away ... to carry out my field research in Zululand, until there again I found myself excluded from groups because I did not know enough gossip.

This original articulation of *why* gossip works, of what it is *for* – to create opacity - continues to form the basis of contemporary scholarship, including post-colonial or anti-colonial scholarship that complicates, inverts and parodies this schematic. (This is scholarship that Gluckman actually anticipated with perspicacity.⁵¹)

Meanwhile, the unprecedented significance of Gluckman's first person narration is that it allows him to define the phenomenological limit of Gossip studies, at the moment of the field's creation:

⁵⁰ Here we can see that gossip studies grew out of anthropological primitivism: A tendency to find aesthetic and formal inspiration in indigenous societies located, stereotypically, in Australia, the Pacific North West, and Tropical Africa. For instance, Gluckman begins his article by citing Paul Radin's *Primitive Man as a Philosopher* (1927).

⁵¹ Gluckman also theorizes at this point that in a society that has been completely fractured by trauma, such as genocide or colonization, this schematic breaks down. The new centers of power that produce gossip are no longer recognizable in the same way. This is because literacy in the gossip that they produce is no longer universally aspirational, as different social groups do not aspire to acquire that literacy.

Outsiders frequently complain that anthropologists are able to find that anything social has a useful function and they may therefore conclude that anthropologists approve of everything. Thus it has been argued that criminal classes are as important as the police ... If I suggest that gossip and scandal are socially virtuous and valuable, this does not mean that I always approve of them. Indeed, in practice I find that when I am gossiping about my friends as well as my enemies I am deeply conscious of performing a social duty; but that when I hear they gossip viciously about me, I am rightfully filled with righteous indignation.

Much of the literature that has followed Gluckman's article has obscured its point. For instance, Robert Pain criticizes Gluckman for positing gossip as a "function" of community while ignoring the fact that gossip can be understood as an operation of individuals who are seeking "information". (280 – 281)⁵² To make this claim, Pain identifies the construction of identity as a prerogative of the community, and the consolidation of information as an initiative of the individual. He thus reifies the community and the individual as a duality. But Gluckman's own first person account of how he experiences gossip when he is gossiping in contrast with when he is being gossiped *about* suggests that Gluckman understood these unrequitable experiences as an aporia.

Sensitivity to this aporia has inspired the type of critical work in gossip studies that most acutely resounds with the representation of gossip in literary *criollismo*, *indigenismo* and *caciquismo*. It opens towards and increases our appreciation of Latin American landscapes as a verbal heterotopia, where the proliferation of gossip creates impossible spaces.

⁵² Pain's article is scathing and misrepresents several quotations from Gluckman's. Paine, Robert. "What Is Gossip About? An Alternative Hypothesis." *Man* ns 2.2 (1967): 278-85

A good example is David Gilmore's ethnography, *Varieties of Gossip in a Spanish Rural Community*, which was published in 1978 and renewed the field of Gossip Studies. Here, Gilmore attempts to intervene in the congenital war between "functionalists" and "informationalists" by proffering a toolkit with which to explore "gossip as a category (and) not one thing or the other" – meaning neither a collective nor an individual enterprise – "but a diverse range of behaviors." (89) The subject of the ethnography is a town that Gilmore calls "Fuenmayor", a pseudonym meant to protect the guilty. Gilmore explains his selection of this town for his study thusly:

In government bulletins, the main product of Fuenmayor is described as wheat ... it would be more appropriate to describe the main product of Fuenmayor as gossip, because 100 percent of the people are engaged in its cultivation. (92)

Gilmore's is, ingeniously, a meta-linguistic study of gossip. He analyzes the way people talk *about* gossip, identifying eleven distinct verbs that the *Fuenmayoreños* use to refer to the act of issuing critical language about a third party.⁵³ This, in turn, allows him to suggest a typology that "may facilitate both data collection and comparative research" on gossip and that focuses on variables including "number of gossipers (subject); status of gossipee (object); instrumentality (purposefulness); and legitimacy (betrayal)." (100)

The salient aspect of Gilmore's typology is that it depends upon his recognition of the way that Fuenmayoreños negotiate space. The way in which they

⁵³ Criticar; Rajar; Darle la lengua; Cuchichear; Murmurar; Chismorrear; Paliquear; Cortar el traje; Charlar; Hablar oculto; Contar

are present. This is most apparent in the narrative flourishes that enrich Gilmore's writing. Take for instance his novelistic introduction of Fuenmayor:

The town is highly nucleated in the typical Andalusian pattern of narrow concentric streets enclosed by parallel rows of two-story houses. Its geometric symmetry is broken only by a few irregular gardens and plazas. ... The impression of architectural compactness is intensified by a cultural trait: the extreme gregariousness of the Fuenmayoreños. These are highly extroverted people who love nothing better than the crowding and bustle of town life. They insist that anyone who must live in the isolated countryside is "sad" and "lonely," and that his life is, as some people put it, "tragic." (90) ⁵⁴

Gilmore thus represents the town as a poignant discursive heterotopia. For the Fuenmayoreños, the state of being present together – and not just present together but being practically *on top of one another* - in the same space and at the same time is inherently aspirational. Thus, these urban folk are naturally convinced that country dwellers are “tragic”.

But whenever Fuenmayoreños do come together they are also compelled by a secondary motivation: To displace a version of themselves that exists in the judgment and discourse of others, that is the subject of gossip and that is *inevitably present where and whenever they are not*. A *Fuenmayoreño* will quickly join any group he sees on the street to displace this specter of himself. And in an inverse gesture that nevertheless reproduces the heterotopia, women refuse to have guests over to their houses. They fear that the invited will be able to deduce an item of gossip simply by

⁵⁴ This passage is deceptively similar to passages in Castellanos's *obra*. It perfectly represents the aesthetic of anthropological neutrality that is properly Castellanos's.

entering this space. *In order to maintain the home as a space that their neighbors want to visit, in order to be hospitable, the Fuenmayoreño keeps those spaces empty.*

Given the deep cultural ties between Andalusia and Hispanic America, it comes as no surprise that different versions of this heterotopia are represented in many canonical Mexican and Latin American novels, though each of these emphasizes a different aspect of the heterotopia. For instance, Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955) highlights the gossipscape's potential to produce literal specters.⁵⁵ While, *La mala hora* (1962) by Gabriel García Márquez, insists upon the visceral nature of experience in the gissipscape, which it represents as an embodied space.⁵⁶

Oficio de tinieblas represents a heterotopia that almost perfectly resembles the one described by Gilmore. In Castellanos's novel, the struggle to occupy or evacuate public space is always a fight to stay ahead of gossip. Even specific details are similar. One competes for territory, not just with other people but also with the self that is the

⁵⁵ In the novel, nearly all narration is related as rumor as a nameless subjectivity overhears the history of the residents of the town of Comala. At first this subjectivity is identified explicitly with the grandson of Pedro Páramo, Juan Preciado. But midway through the novel Juan Preciado dies and his privilege to hear, or to *overhear*, is reduced to equality with that of the other dead residents of the dead town. From this point onward the novel gives all of the residents of Comala access to the stories that are told about themselves; but this access is contingent upon each resident being deceased. The premise of the novel is that the only situation in which one can be present with that other version of oneself that is the subject of gossip is a spectral one.

⁵⁶ In this mystery novel, an unknown individual posts *pasquinades* at night in a nameless town. After one of these slanderous bulletins inspires a man to kill his wife's lover, military forces are dispatched to keep the peace. The soldiers, however, become the violent doubles of the towns' original population. The novel thus represents citizens' desperate, and ultimately self defeating scramble to carve out personal narrative space for themselves. First, they try to avoid their neighbors. Later, they must also avoid military discipline. Slander and libel, biting language, are identified with physical discomfort and deformity, as Márquez focuses his physical descriptions of characters on the deteriorating conditions of their mouths and teeth.

subject of others' discourse. The chain of gossip unravels according to the layout of the city, through streets surrounding houses surrounding discrete courtyards. And the Coletos are profoundly ambivalent about houseguests.

In the culminating chapters of the novel, the city is placed, first under the threat of siege, and then under an imaginary siege by Indian revolutionaries. (Imaginary, because the Indian's march on Ciudad Real becomes a perpetual march, as they go in circles and procrastinate ever arriving at the city.) As this unfolds, the aporia of the gossipscape becomes less tolerable. The functional necessity of gossip is temporarily overshadowed by the existential threat that gossip poses. The narration imagines moments in the life of the city in which gossip is temporarily suspended.

These moments constitute a state of emergency in Ciudad Real and engender temporary political disruptions and involve the emergence of female solidarity, the dissolution of male privilege during heterosexual discursive relationships and the validation of articulations by political pariahs as legitimate political analysis. The novel inverts a pattern that we find in most progressive, contemporary literature, which emphasizes the state of emergency as one that poses special danger to minorities.

Gossip as usual: Inside the heterotopia

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to describe how the novel's main characters exist normally within the gossipscape, before gossip is suspended. This description is made possible by the fact that, *Oficio de tinieblas*, before being an

existentialist novel, is a meticulous, narrative anthropology of a community in which gossip exists as a functional phenomenon. I have schematized this description of the gossipscape by considering the relative *functional* success with which characters navigate it. At the same time, this section reveals that inequality is characteristic of situations in which gossip *functions*.

Catalina Díaz Puiljá, the Tzotzil matriarch who eventually enacts the crucifixion of Domingo and incites revolution in Chiapas, is by far the most successful denizen of the gossipscape. Her success in this context contrasts with her marginalization as an Indigenous woman in a postcolonial situation.

At the beginning of *Oficio de tinieblas*, Catalina Díaz Puiljá is concerned by two rumors that have gained traction in her community. The first is that she is barren, an item that could impact her credibility as a *curandera*. The second is that her younger brother is intellectually disabled, which wounds Catalina because it is through her bond with her brother that she maintains a sense of connection to her childhood and an idealized past in which the Tzotzil were more culturally integrated.

Catalina neutralizes these two stories by using the rape of a young Tzotzil girl, Marcela Gómez, to her advantage. After the rape of Marcela by the *Caxlan* Leonardo Cifuentes, Catalina convinces Marcela's mother to marry her to Catalina's brother. She later adopts the baby that resulted from the rape as her own. By engineering the spectacle of marriage, Catalina creates a pretext for herself and her newly expanded family to reassert their presence in the markets, camps and trade routes where members of the community live in close proximity. And she displaces the critical speech that had begun to circulate there.

Another character who has unexpected success navigating the gossipscape is Isabel Cifuentes, Leonardo Cifuentes's wife. Isabel, seen as an archetype, look like a victim. Her husband is an infamous womanizer. However, Isabel is the functional beneficiary of this infamy.

Her position of privilege is referred to first, in the scene of Marcela's rape. After Leonardo attacks Marcela in the shop of one of his old mistresses, the young girl escapes and runs through the city. Isabel Cifuentes, attracted by the noise, watches the flight from a window in her house.

This is not the first time that she has watched this scene unfold and Isabel's gaze further embellishes Ciudad Real as a heterotopia. Her Andalusian style house, with its shuttered windows and private courtyards, is not just a container for her humiliation, it is also a panopticon. Her gaze, directed at the Tzotzil women who are her husband's victims, characterizes her as an accomplice in their victimization.⁵⁷ And in fact, this situation is advantageous to Isabel. While Indian bodies absorb the excesses of her husband's sexuality, the threat of adultery with another Ladina woman is avoided, as is the destabilizing impact that a rumor about that kind of disloyalty would bring.

Isabel does eventually become the victim of a rumor that her husband has committed adultery with another Ladina, Julia Quevedo. However, Isabel benefits

⁵⁷ The geography of Ciudad Real is an Apartheid geography. It is constituted by the constant exercise of motion by the Tzotzil. Exercises of penetration, escape, maintenance of distance, and even residence. These repetitive motions form a type of discipline. While these motions are all automated, there are non-tzotzil agents that reinforce them. In *Oficio de tinieblas*, at the beginning of the novel, these are represented by a group of atajadoras, low class mestiza women who attack Marcela Gomez and her party as they pass through a last bit of wilderness before entering Ciudad Real. These women will, costumarly, surround the tzotzil on a path, physically assault them, and steel their wares.

from this rumor as well, since she stands in positive relief against Julia, whose performance of her femininity is judged too urban by the ladies of Ciudad Real.

Julia Quevedo, nicknamed La Alazana, appears to be a completely inept denizen of the Coletos gossipscape. She enters into a relationship with Leonardo Cifuentes, the husband of a respectable Coleta lady. And she then breaks the rule of (in)hospitality in Ciudad Real: She begins to hold salons, inviting the ladies of the town over to Leonardo Cifuentes' house. She also establishes an age-inappropriate friendship with Isabel's young daughter, Idolina, over relying on her to explain Coletos society.

The gossip that attaches to Julia is so strong that phenomenologically it appears to precede the action that it describes. We see this in the following passage, which describes how Isabel and Leonardo are robbed of the opportunity to act *originally*, by the apriori inscription of their actions inside of gossip:

Las entrevistas de los amantes no eran fáciles. La Alazana las preparaba con cuidado, creyendo que la discreción basta para tapar la boca de la maledicencia. No había testigos pero sobraban testimonios. Y como el mal no se inventa sino que se repite, a estos gratuitos informadores de la curiosidad pública les bastaba repetir. Historias viejas, sobradas. La misma historia que Leonardo y Julia vivían, considerándola original. (197)⁵⁸

⁵⁸ This quote also hints at an important aspect of gossip as a quotational practice. The content of gossip is not simply reported discourse. The content of gossip is always and originally reported discourse. There is no genealogy of the reported discourse that leads to an original speaker, a first person speaker. The "first person" that pronounces an item of gossip is always already reporting that item. How is this possible? My assumption is that this is possible because of a mimetic break. Were the first person to pronounce an item of gossip a true first person then their pronunciation would have some representational claim. "I saw Johnny kissing Mary" would claim to represent Johnny kissing Mary. This is never the case with gossip, which, as an irreducible category of language is always divorced from its representational function. This possibility may present a secondary, decidedly inconvenient possibility: There may be no linguistic cues to tell us whether an item is representational or gossip. "I saw Johnny kissing Mary" might be either. This is especially true if Johnny really did kiss

Finally, Julia becomes the victim of *pasquinades*, anonymously published, calumnious letters, composed by Idolina. She discovers these letters, accidentally, in the Cifuentes house. At least some of them appear to be addressed to her husband, Fernando Ulloa. Most frightening to Julia, however, is the fact that these items, which detail her infidelity, apparently mean nothing to Fernando, who has received them but never accused her.

All this notwithstanding, Julia's ineptitude makes her the most logical avatar for readers, who learn, along with Julia, how gossip functions in Ciudad Real. And ultimately, Julia survives her emersion in Coletto society.

It is Julia's husband, Fernando Ulloa who represents an object lesson in the material damage that gossip can do. His experience confirms gossip as a form of verbal violence.

Fernando Ulloa has come to Ciudad Real as an interpreter of federal law. His chief purpose is to enact land reform. To this end, he symbolically appropriates the tools of colonial bureaucracy: An Indian translator and Jesuit maps. However, to support himself he becomes a mathematics professor at the military college in Ciudad Real. And it is as a pedagogue that he becomes vulnerable to gossip. According to rumor, he is a communist, possibly an atheist, bent on the corruption of Coletto youth.

Mary. However, I am convinced that the "sinful" nature of gossip, if gossip figures as a categorical sin in *Oficio de Tinieblas*, arises from its betrayal of a representational duty reserved for language. This is, specifically, the duty of representing a Catholic reality. Gossip is an inversion of the sanctified language category that the Catholic tradition calls news.

He becomes the victim of an academic mobbing, is fired from his job and unable to hire people to assist him at his bureaucratic work.

Fernando Ulloa's vulnerability, as a sanctioned enforcer of civil law, stands in relief against the invulnerability of Leonardo Cifuentes, a prototypical cacique, who is impervious to civil law. Rumor confirms that Leonardo has risen to entrepreneurial power by assassinating his business rivals. At one point, when Isabel accuses Cifuentes of having killed her late husband in order to marry her, he invokes civil law's failure to punish him, responding: "Lo dicen los chismes del pueblo. Y también lo dices tú. Pero si fuera verdad no estaría yo aquí, sino bien potreado en una cárcel ... Nadie puede probar lo contrario." (70). Here, Leonardo calls our attention to the most important function of gossip: Guilt that cannot be processed civilly becomes exceptional, and is processed instead inside of gossip.

But Fernando Ulloa's real foil in Ciudad Real is not Leonardo Cifuentes. It is a young cleric, Padre Manuel. Because Padre Manuel, like Fernando Ulloa, is an idealist.

Padre Manuel, like Ulloa, fails to recognize the functional necessity of gossip. Instead, as he explains to Bishop Alonso, he understands gossip to be a symptom of Coletos' "*urbanidad*". By *urbanidad*, he means the tendency of Coletos' to participate in an over-scrupulous critical discourse, one that avoids direct confrontation and focuses on behavior that it judges to be offensive. Padre Manuel's analysis of this form of discourse is, ironically, a sophisticated humanistic critique: He correctly observes that when critical discourse focuses only on those forms of injury that it

judges offensive, it becomes impossible to recognize injuries committed against those who are beyond offending: Indians:

Y la moral de los coletos es muy peculiar. Son escrupulosos hasta la exageración, hasta la gazmoñería, en sus tratos mutuos. ... Pero ese mismo comerciante integro, ese profesionista cabal, no vacila un instante si se le presenta la ocasión de robar a un indio ... cuando raptan en la calle a una niña para esclavizarla en el servicio doméstico, pueden hacer alarde de su hazaña sin que nadie la encuentre reprochable. Lo sería si de un modo indirecto perjudicara los intereses de otro ladino. Pero hecha esta salvedad, ¿quién condenaría al que sacude a un árbol mostrenco para aprovecharse de sus frutos? ¿Quién, sino el que cayera en la aberración de suponer que los árboles son persona y que por lo mismo deben ser respetadas como tales? (105)

When the Bishop Alonso reminds Padre Manuel that he is compelled to forgive the sins of the Coletos, Padre Manuel responds with another sophisticated humanistic critique: Forgiveness cannot be enacted by a proxy:

Manuel: La urbanidad no es mi fuerte, monseñor, Mis maestros me enseñaron a ser cortés con Dios, no con los hombres.

Alonso: Ibas predispuesto contra el dueño de la casa. De Leonardo Cifuentes corren historias, se cuentan hazañas no muy edificantes. Pero, ¿qué vamos a hacer nosotros? Nuestro oficio no es juzgar; es perdonar.

Manuel: Muy cómodo... mientras no somos los ofendidos.

The Bishop Alonso interprets Padre Manuel's formalism as an inability to adapt to Coletos culture. Citing rumors that Padre Manuel possesses *Cristero* sympathies (la autoridad civil no entiende de sutilezas y encuentra que tus actividades son sediciosas." (103)) he sends Padre Manuel to San Juan Chamula, to serve the Indians there. Predictably, Manuel is no more adaptable to Tzotzil cultural mores than to

Coletos. He observes that the Tzotzil are able to participate in the rites of the church but unable to internalize the theology behind those rites. He comes to view them as uneducable and abandons his parish before it crucifies Domingo.

The only Ladino men present at the crucifixion are Fernando Ulloa and his assistant, Cesar Santiago. Cesar Santiago, who is not from Ciudad Real, is, like Julia Quevedo, an outsider. But he is not an avatar for the reader. Instead he is a *mysterious stranger*, a character possessing divine, or diabolical insight into the way the diegetic universe functions.

Cesar Santiago is from Comitán, a city just like Ciudad Real. He left Comitán after his family, and that more human version of himself that lived there, were destroyed by gossip.

First, a rumor circulated in Comitán that Cesar Santiago's father had accidentally inherited money that was supposed to have been bequeathed to the church. His mother, humiliated by this rumor, and by the nickname given to her husband, "el toro dorado", became a religious zealot. Finally, his brother, Límbaro Santiago, influenced by their mother's piety, committed suicide rather than live modestly wealthy. To Cesar's horror, in the wake of his parents' debilitating grief, the Comitecos redoubled their rumor mongering, treating Límbaro's death as a new scandal:

En cuanto el ruido del disparo se hubo extinguido, ya en plena posesión del juicio, los espectadores comenzaron a reflexionar sobre el hecho. De la reflexión se llegó al fallo: los Santiagos habían tenido el castigo que se merecían. Y ya bajo el amparo de esta certidumbre atenuante se podía hablar del suceso y sus consecuencias con despego, con frivolidad, con burla. ¡Y vaya que la burla cae bien a los comitecos! Pueblo de gente ingeniosa y aguda, ágil

para las respuestas, certera para los apodos. La “raspa” era su entrenamiento favorito. (170)

In Ciudad Real, Cesar Santiago leads an unremarked upon life. Until Fernando is driven out of the military college, and becomes unable to hire anyone to be his assistant. Cesar Santiago, who had been a student at the college, drops out and volunteers to work for Fernando.

Perhaps, having already seen his reputation killed in Comitán, Cesar Santiago is not afraid to see it killed again in Ciudad Real. However, it is also César Santiago’s intention to use his position as Fernando’s assistant to foment a caste war between Ladinos and Indians. The ensuing violence and terror will be his revenge on society. This manipulation is most dramatically represented when Cesar Santiago steals a scarf from Julia Quevedo, and drapes it around one of the stone idols that Catalina’s animistic cult worships, so that it may be found there when Ladino authorities destroy the Tzotzil’s temple.

Although, it must be affirmed, it is the unprecedented event of the crucifixion of the child, Domingo that ultimately brings the Tzotzil to declare war on the Coletos. This is an event that Cesar Santiago could neither have engendered, nor predicted. Instead, he is happy to receive it as a gift.

The Crucifixion of the child

In *Oficio de tinieblas*, gossip does not lead to the crucifixion of the nine year old boy, Domingo. Nor does it ever refer to it. This break in the unfolding of the plot

is underscored by the fact that Rosario Castellanos portrays the crucifixion as an event that is immediately purged from regional memory, and which has no predicate status in regional discourse.

This is an obvious conceit of the novelist. In fact, Reifler Bricker writes about status of the crucifixion of a child named Domingo in both regional historiography, and regional liturgy.

According to Reifler, the historian Cristóbal Molina reports that on December 22, 1867, a Chamulan girl, Agustina Gomes Checheb, saw three stones drop from the sky while she was tending her sheep in the hamlet of Tzajalhemel. She took the stones home with her, and they remained with her until January 10, 1868, when Pedro Díaz Cuscat, the local fiscal, arrived to investigate the matter. Instead of turning them over to the parish priest, as he was supposed to do, Cuscat took the stones home with him and kept them in a box. According to Molina, Cuscat convinced his neighbors that the stones “were knocking at the door to get out... and that they should be treated as sacred objects. As news of these miraculous objects was disseminated, Indians came to worship them... With the help of Cuscat and Agustina Gomes Checheb, the stones “talked” to the worshipers. Not long afterward several clay figurines were added to the cult paraphernalia; Cuscat declared Agustina to have given birth to them and therefore to be the “Mother of God” (Bricker, 89).

Religious revival at Chamula soon gave way to dissensus, and militarization: Bricker quotes Pineda, who remembers these events twenty years after they occurred, “The leaders of this rebellion exhorted the Indians to the Catholic saints and, on Good Friday in 1868, crucified a ten or eleven year old boy, Domingo Gómez Checheb, to

be worshipped as the Indian Christ” (76). And Bricker observes that today, “The Passion cult is the only cult in Chamula for which the object of devotion is not a saint figure in the church. The emphasis is on impersonation rather than idolatry ... There is abundant evidence that the Christ whom the Passion impersonates is this Indian Christ rather than the Ladino Savior (Bricker, 89).

Castellanos has adapted this story: First, In *Oficio de tinieblas* Pedro Díaz Cuscat is replaced by Catalina Díaz Puiljá (Pedro Winikitón’s wife) as the leader of the cult of the stones. In the second half of the novel, Díaz, disillusioned with her work as a wife, mother and *ilol*, goes into seclusion in a cave that she and her brother once visited when they were children. It is there that she encounters the stones around which she forms the cult. After a period of silent communion with them, she leaves and brings the community back to the cave, where she now acts as a translator for the stones, asking them questions from the people and relaying their answers. Second, where the finder of the stones and Domingo are linked, historically, by name only – Gomes or Gómez – Castellanos imagines that the leader of the cult, and Domingo’s mother are the same person. She has Catalina adopt Domingo nine years before she kills him.

The Chapter in question is Chapter XXXIII: Chapter 33, spelled out with three crosses and three individual digits. It is narrated from the perspectives of both Catalina and Domingo. Told from this double perspective, that of mother and son, the attack is characterized not just as a ritual killing, but also as an infanticide.

Castellanos exposes the psychology of motherhood as both banal, and extreme. There is nothing particular about Díaz’s mental state. Nothing that would not resonate

with Criolla readers. She sees in her son all of her communities' reproach: "¿Quién es este extraño que ella ha entregado como complemento natural a la cruz? El bastardo de un caxlán de Jobel; la deshonra de una muchacha de su raza; la vergüenza oculta de Lorenzo; el reproche de su marido; su propia llaga" (319). And she remembers the abnegation that has pierced her life since she adopted him: "Si, la llaga que no cesa de sangrar, que no cicatriza nunca porque Domingo está presente siempre. A medianoche, cuando todos descansan, ella, Catalina, escucha la respiración del niño. Si es sosegada se apacigua. Pero si se entrecorta en un jadeo, correo a conjurar la amenaza de la fiebre" (319). For nine years, in other words, Catalina has been a mother - "No duerme. Vela en la oscuridad" (319) – a slave to the fact that her own happiness is contingent upon the survival of her child.

But by crucifying Domingo, Catalina does not avenge herself of the sacrifices that, as his mother, she has made up to this point. Instead, she compounds them. As she watches her community prepare Domingo for the cross, she feels "defraudada" (319) because she knows now that he will never reach adulthood and repay her investment in him.

Castellanos also returns, in this chapter, to her vocation as a writer of children's literature, or literature about children. Here, for the first and last time, the novel is told from Domingo's perspective.

Domingo is not confused when the adults kneel at his feet, because he is used to the idea that adults kneel to talk to children. When they give him liquor, he is surprised by the taste, but then falls blissfully into his first inebriation, thinking that he would like to frolic in a field like a puppy. After he is bound to the cross, he is awoken

suddenly by Catalina, who throws cold water on him, in order to bring him back to himself. (Catalina is worried that God will not count an unconscious victim.) But even though he is uncomfortable, he is still not afraid, because he recognizes in Catalina's expression her intent to protect him. The first time that he is stabbed, he is still not afraid, because he feels that he can escape from his body and his agony along with his blood, which is gushing from the wound. Domingo only comes to experience terror at the end, when he recognizes that he has become subjected to strength; a strength defined in apposition of his weakness, and as he feels that it is not his own life that is ending but the world.

Castellanos's omniscient narrator, still inside Domingo's mind, explains the ways that Domingo's education has and has not prepared him to experience his own crucifixion:

Es un niño pero su infancia no ha sido preservada de la contemplación de la lucha desigual entre los seres. Desde su nacimiento lo marcaron con la cifra indeleble de la única ley que rige el mundo: la de la fuerza. Presenció, temblando, los asaltos nocturnos de los coyotes a los gallineros, vio descender, rápido y certero como una flecha, el gavilán sobre su presa; se defendió de las atajadoras en las entradas a Jobel; durante la celebración de las festividades asistió a las riñas de los rivales. Y vio, sin espanto, como sobre la cara del caído, golpeaba, una y otra vez, el caite de suela triple y cuádruple del vencedor, hasta desfigurarlo. Pero nada era semejante a la desgracia que se había abatido sobre él. Nada. Ni siquiera ese instante en que la tribu entera enarbolaba el palo, el machete, el luk, para acabar con el perro rabioso. O con el brujo.

To understand Domingo as the double object, as a sacrifice and an infanticide, it is necessary to understand this attack in its mass(ive) dimension. It is *massive* violence not because it is carried out by a mass of people – indeed, when we consider

the way it is narrated, from the mother and then the son's perspective, we see right away that it is an intimate scene – but because of its destructive intentionality towards an object that it simultaneously constructs as an individual. This construction is a parody of the construction of the modern individual intended by a federally sanctioned pedagogical program that Castellanos, as an administrator and teacher, adheres to.⁵⁹ In this scene, Domingo is brought back to a state of speechlessness, and then taught to speak again. Once he is able to speak, the discourse that Castellanos attributes to him is the one quoted above, recognizably, that of the archetypical child subject that we find at the heart of indigenist literature:

In this literature, the child is subjected to a regimen of violence that is taboo.

Not in the sense that, in America or Europe, it is taboo at this time to subject children in literature to any *amount* of violence.⁶⁰ Rather, this regimen is taboo in the sense that

⁵⁹ The child first emerges as an individualized subject in the political context of institutional indigenismo. In Chiapas the SEP (Secretaría de Educación Pública), for which Castellanos worked, becomes the apparatus responsible for the subjection of children to pedagogic *indigenismo*: identified, chiefly, with bilingual or translational education. The child's experience is necessarily the experience that institutional indigenismo first seeks to act on. This action takes the form of an attempted intervention the child's experience, to transform it into individual knowledge during childhood. (See Lewis, Stephen E. *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945*)

⁶⁰ Certainly, when the child emerges as a subject in socialist literature in Europe, for instance, the work of Michael Ende, he is subjected to really excessive amounts of violence. This is true even in the domain of literary criticism. It was the children's literary theorist, Bruno Bettelheim that insisted that the function of the child in literature/as well as literature for the child was to represent or instill a terror that would bring the child once again into contact with the imminence of his death. (Bettelheim, Bruno: *The Uses of Enchantment*). And this is not a minor point, or a digression. I bring this up because it is an ongoing problem in Latin American literary criticism that the representation of violence against children that we find in the indigenist classics spanning the period of 1945 to 1974 is almost never related to the violence against children that we find in contemporary, European literature.

it conforms to a particular aesthetic that encompasses the taboo: Bodily processes, consumption, elimination and copulation exchange functions. This aesthetic is perfected by José Maria Arguedas. (See the rape of Marcelina in *Los Rios Profundos*.) Not only in his novels, but also in his short stories, many of which were originally performed orally for a working class Peruvian audience, Arguedas folds the abuse that he was subjected to as a child into a diegesis that combines the particularly Hispanic aesthetic of *el picaresco* with the existential; the insatiable desires that one cannot escape in life are pulled apart in space and in time. Arguedas's narratives about children are not activist. Instead, they locate and celebrate the joy at the heart of common childhood humiliations. When Arguedas read his short stories out loud in Peru, his audiences laughed.⁶¹

The siege of gossip lifted

After Domingo is killed, the Indians begin their march on Ciudad Real. It is a march that will never end because they go round in circles, attacking provincial haciendas, but never arriving at the city. César Santiago explains that the Indians are not disorganized; rather their route is predetermined. It is merely an iteration of routes taken in the past. Nevertheless, rumors of the impending invasion reach Ciudad Real and cause panic. Two men on the night watch kill one another, terrified of the prospect

⁶¹ We hear this laughter when José Maria Arguedas reads aloud from his *Confesiones* an episode called *La Mula*. MrRppc. *Confesiones de José María Arguedas – La Mula*. Actualizado el 19 ene. 2011. Accedido en Marzo 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2qy0EukRDc>.

of becoming victims of an Indian massacre. The official story is that they were assassinated. Leonardo Cifuentes confides in Julia Quevedo the truth: “Pero no los mataron los indios. Eso lo invitamos nosotros. / ¿Entonces qué? / Se mataron entre ellos. De miedo.” (335)

By confiding in Julia at this moment Leonardo Cifuentes breaks a silence by which he had previously excluded her from political intercourse: “Julia conocía muy bien estas separaciones que impone, aun a la proximidad más íntima, la preocupación, el cuidado de asuntos ajenos al amor. Y las detestaba.” (334) Whereas the novel has, up to this point, constituted Leonardo Cifuentes as the prototypical cacique: A philanderer, rapist and murderer intent on achieving commercial and political *soberanía*, now he becomes the first man in *Oficio de tinieblas* to cross the divide between the male and female spheres and establish camaraderie with a woman. This radical gesture is precipitated by a reversal in roles:

Leonardo Cifuentes was, under normal conditions, impervious to scandal. He was not bothered by the fact that gossip about his villainy circulated throughout Ciudad Real, because he understood that it did so only as a supplement to his immunity before the law. Now, however, Leonardo, who remains otherwise calm in the state of emergency, is scandalized by the conduct of those around him: “Se escandalizaba de la conducta de los otros. Les había señalado, como su jefe que era en la presente situación de emergencia, obligaciones muy precisas. Todas los beneficiaban directamente a ellos y sin embargo las evadían con los pretextos más inverosímiles” (335).

Castellanos gives the cacique narrative an anticlimactic twist; It is Leonardo Cifuentes, and his loyalty to his city's functional depravity, that the city *herself* betrays, leading Leonardo to reflect: "(de una manera difícil, dolorosa y, para él, imposible de formular) era que no valía la pena haberse esforzado tanto por ser una parte integrante, viva de Ciudad Real" (334). It suspends this depravity, including gossip. Leonardo Cifuentes is almost horrified that he no longer has to feign discretion when visiting Julia Quevedo in her husband's home: "Visitaba a la Alazana sin para consumir sus abominaciones" (335).

Julia Quevedo's home is the apex of this phenomenon of candor.

The last half of the novel deconstructs the institution of the *tertulia*, which is the most important space of gossip in the novel.

A *tertulia* is a recurring meeting, in which people from the same class come together in an intimate setting to share their downtime. In the early 20th century, in Central America and Southern Mexico, seating areas in cafés where people spent long periods of time were sometimes called *tertulias*. Additionally, the word *tertulia* can refer to a manual. There are *tertulias* for Spanish grammar and Spanish usage. The *tertulia* is not necessarily a gendered space, but in *Oficio de tinieblas* it is upper class women who attend weekly *tertulias*.⁶²

The right to host the *tertulia* is a dubious privilege, as Julia Quevedo learns when she wrests this right from Isabel Cifuentes. With the help of Leonardo and Idolina, Isabel's daughter, she succeeds in relocating the *tertulia* to her own home.

⁶² Vega Jiménez, Patricia. *Con Sabor a Tertulia : Historia Del Consumo Del Café En Costa Rica, 1840-1940*. 1. ed. San José, Costa Rica: Icafe, Instituto del Café de Costa Rica , 2004

Leonardo subsidizes the food and drink, and Isabel instructs Julia in the minutiae of the organization of the event. However, her attendees abuse her hospitality, dirtying her house and eating all of her food.

Worst of all, Julia's guests finally include her in their gossip, revealing an unpleasant truth: That there is no variety in experience in Ciudad Real. What would seem to qualify an event as fodder for gossip, its singularity, is an illusion. Every item of gossip is an iteration, because every experience that it refers to is, universally, Coletto.

A shift in narrative voice and style underscores this revelation. The omniscient narrator gives way to a second person narrator, which tells "you" (*la coleta*) everything that you will experience in Ciudad Real. It does this, while repeating a litany of objects around which "your" experience will hinge: El padre, los hombres, el dinero:

El padre, ante cuya presencia enmudecen el terror los niños y de respeto los mayores...

El padre que bendice la mesa y el sueño, el que alarga su mano para que la besen sus deudos en el saludo y en la despedida.

El padre que, una vez, te sentó en sus rodillas y acarició tu larga trenza de adolescente. (286)

Another object that constitutes the litany is *fama*; reputation.

Fama. Hay que hacerse una cruz sobre la boca para que ángel guardián nos libre de cometer el crimen – porque sí, es un crimen – de herir la reputación de nuestros semejantes, de inventar calumnias, de propagar rumores.

¡Pero la conversación sería tan desabrida sin el granito de sal de las murmuraciones!

Con suavidad, con lentitud, con delicadeza se remueven los sepulcros blanqueados y escapa el olor fétido de los secretos que no pueden callarse porque claman al cielo. De injusticia, de dolor, de miseria.

No se puede callar. Porque si se callara lo que está oculto bajo los techos, bajo las sábanas, se pudriría, hasta contaminar el mundo entero.

Because of the inclusion of *fama* in this litany, gossip, originally about people's lives, is revealed to be the thing that people's lives are about in Ciudad Real. At least, it is normally.

But when the city is subjected to military siege, the siege that it was placed under by gossip is lifted:

Leonardo volvió la cabeza para ver a Julia ya vestida, lista para su tertulia de la tarde. ¿Pero quién asistiría? Las que no estaban encerradas a piedra y lodo, refugiadas en alacenas y en el interior de aljibes vacíos vagaban por las calles como locas, confesando a gritos sus pecados, arrodillándose ante cualquier transeúnte para pedirle perdón. (335)

Reflections:

Let us never entertain the idea that gossip in *Oficio de Tinieblas* is a means for wondering self-expression, or for solidarity. (To borrow words used by Spacks.) There can be no genuine wonder about experience expressed by gossip when that gossip is about an experience that is already known, and that is universally particular to ones town. Likewise, there can be no solidarity.

Recently, in 2013, Edgardo Cozarinky expanded his essay, *El museo del chisme*, originally published in 1973. The essay posits narrative fiction as a genre of gossip. It arrives at this position as it compares the situation of the writer of narrative fiction to that of the writer of history in America. The latter earns a space of social

privilege. With his discourse, he performs an obligation to the establishing members of his society and to its descendants. The former, eschews this space. His discourse treats only the particular, and works only to provoke pleasure. – Cozarinsky, evoking what I have called the aporia of gossip, posited by Gluckman, focuses on the *pleasure* that story telling brings the story teller as, potentially, the other side of the pain that it brings to its subject. - Most frequently, Cozarinky reports, the fiction writer does not realize what he has eschewed until after the fact. That is, until he has discovered that the kind of writing he does is a form of leisure (*ocio*), which the pillars of his society revile because it is neutral towards them.

Cozarinky implies that the intense aversion that national, civic and ethnic authorities feel towards both gossip and narrative fiction is proportionate to the threat that a neutral position represents.

Castellanos appears aware of the potential of gossip to constitute such a threat. The siege of gossip will be instituted again in Ciudad Real. It is a siege under which women and men, Ladinos and Indians, will find that their lives refer back to gossip, and that the content of that gossip is universally particular. A siege that renders Chiapas neutral, and thus dissident before the consideration of the nation state.

CHAPTER II BIBLIOGRABY

- Arguedas, José María. *Los Ríos Profundos*. [Barcelona]: Losada, 1998
- Bricker, Victoria Reifler. *The Indian Christ, the Indian King : the Historical Substrate of Maya Myth and Ritual*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981
- Foster, Eric K. "Research on Gossip: Taxonomy, Methods, and Future Directions." *Review of General Psychology*, Educational Publishing Foundation 2004, Vol. 8, No. 2, 78–9
- Castellanos, Rosario. *Ciudad Real: (cuentos)*. Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1960
- Los Convidados De Agosto*. México: Ediciones Era, 1964
- Oficio de tinieblas*. New York, New York: Penguin Group, 1977
- Cozarinsky, Edgardo. *Nuevo Museo Del Chisme*. Buenos Aires: La Bestia Equilátera, 2013
- Gil, Iriarte M. L. *Testamento De Hécuba: Mujeres E Indígenas En La Obra De Rosario Castellanos*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1999
- Gilmore, David D. "Varieties of Gossip in a Spanish Rural Community." *Ethnology*. 17 (1978): 89-99
- Gluckman, Max. "Gossip and Scandal." *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Jun., 1963), pp. 307-316
- Gollnick, Brian. "El Ciclón De Chiapas: El Desarrollo Reciente Del Indigenismo Mexicano." *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana*, Año 24, no. 49, 1999
- Kristal, Efraín. *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006
- Lewis, Stephen E. *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005
- Paine, Robert. "What Is Gossip About? An Alternative Hypothesis." *Man* ns 2.2 (1967): 278-85

Prieto, René. "The Literature of Indigenismo" Ed. Gonzales de Echeverría, Roberto & Enrique Pupo-Walker. *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, 1996

Salvato, Nick. Editorial Comment: "The Age of Gossip Dom." *Modern Drama*. 53:289-296. 2010

Sommers, Joseph. "The Indian-oriented Novel in Latin America: New Spirit, New Forms, New Scope". *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 6.2, 1964

"El ciclo de Chiapas: nueva corriente literaria". Cuadernos Americanos Vol. 133, N 2., 1964

Revista ICACH. Tuxtla Gutiérrez, núm. 14, enero-junio, 1965

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *Gossip*. New York: Knopf, 1985

CHAPTER 3
THE REPRODUCTION OF WOMEN RADICALS' BOOKS IN THE
CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN NOVEL:
A CASE STUDY OF MARIO VARGAS LLOSA'S
EL PARAISO EN LA OTRA ESQUINA

... escribiste, a poco de llegar a Francia, tu primer libro. Mejor dicho, librito, folleto de pocas páginas: *Sobre la necesidad de dar una buena acogida a las extranjeras*. Ahora, ese texto romántico, sentimental, lleno de buenas intenciones acerca de la nula o mala acogida que recibían las forasteras en Francia, te avergonzaba por su ingenuidad. (351)

This chapter explains and contextualizes a practice of quotation in Mario Vargas Llosa's *El paraíso en la otra esquina* that attributes to the radical 18th century feminist, Flora Tristán, feelings of shame about her books. For example, the above excerpt summarizes Tristán's pamphlet, *Sobre la necesidad de dar una buena acogida a las extranjeras*, a treatise about the mistreatment of female travelers by the French, criticizing it as romantic, sentimental and naive: "romántico, sentimental ... te avergonzaba por su ingenuidad." The excerpt is typical not only in the way that it negatively qualifies Tristán's writing, but also in the way that it softens the blow of its critique. Using a second person narrative voice, it imbeds judgment inside of Flora's own interior monologue. We, the readers, thus understand that in *El paraíso* it is Flora who brutalizes her own work, and not the novel's third person narrator.

This brutalization constitutes a ruminative thought pattern that defines the way that the character Flora Tristán relates to the books she wrote before 1843 from the vantage point of a diegetic present, 1844, and contrasts with the way that she relates to

the books she is currently disseminating or drafting. The latter category includes, *La unión obrera*, Tristán's manifesto for the creation of an international workers' union, and also *Le Tour de France*, a journal which the narrator tells us will be published after her death in 1844 by her biographer Jules Puech. Her orientation towards these works is characterized by activity and intentionality. Flora is physically exhausted but spiritually invigorated by the labor of disseminating *La unión obrera*; And this is communicated by the undaunted tone that the narrator bestows on Tristán in the diegetic present, which, supposedly, corresponds to the undaunted tone of her journal.

The difference between these two ways of relating to her books, past and present, produces an effect: what I call the artifact status of the historical Flora Tristán's books in Vargas Llosa's novel. This becomes, in turn, a model for the potential artifact status of Vargas Llosa's own, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina*. Understanding this represents a first step towards understanding *El Paraíso*'s singular potential to transcend a small but significant corpus of novels in Latin America that do not simply quote from, but actually reproduce the books of women radicals.

Mario Vargas Llosa is not the only Peruvian writer of the early 21st century to have published a work on the basis of Flora Tristán's books. In 2011, the playwright Juan Rivera Saavedra also published two plays, *Ciudadana de segunda categoría* and *Tras aquella puerta*. The first play imagines an encounter between Tristán and an imaginary female proletarian. Saavedra actually wrote most of *Ciudadana* in the mid 1980s. Today, however, he does not consider it a success: "Era básicamente una pieza para mujeres ... no me convencía de todo" (Saavedra, *Voces*, 88) He prefers *Tras aquella puerta*, in which all of his characters are men, and celebrities at that: "Chateaubriand, Lord Byron,

Goethe, Eugenio Sué” (88). In *Tras aquella puerta*, Saavedra stages a conversation between these men, about Tristán, at the gates of hell.

Saavedra records, in his own journal, that his students informed him that Vargas Llosa was writing about Tristán at the same time. (Saavedra, *Obras Seleccionadas*, 117) Later, in an interview for *Voces*, he reports coinciding with Vargas Llosa in terms of his interpretation of Tristán’s writing and what it signified about her sexuality: He agrees with Vargas Llosa that there is no evidence that Tristán’s lesbianism ever materialized outside of her letters to her female friends.

All of these works embrace the same deviances and eccentricities that make the books they quote radical.⁶³ Still, *El Paraíso en la otra esquina* is unique in the way that its use of its original source material produces the figure of the artifact.

The figure of the artifact

The figure of the artifact is distinguished by three phenomena: authorship, transfiguration and excision.

To speak about a book as an artifact is to return to the figure of the author. “An artifact has necessarily a maker or an author; thus *artifact* and *author* can be regarded as correlative concepts” (Hilpinen, 2011). The distance between authorial intention and an

⁶³ I would not, for comparison, include in this list Elena Poniatowska’s novel *Querido Diego te abraza Quiela*, an epistolary novel composed of letters written by the Russian painter Angelina Beloff to her husband Diego Rivera. This novel is thematically comparable to the books I have already mentioned, since it reads as an apology for its main character’s self-destructive commitment to her male partner.

artifact is a defining question in the field of artifact studies. On the one hand, sources have asserted that an artifact is only ever a thing its author has intended. On the other it has been claimed that the artifact has at times been both this intended thing and also the byproduct of its fabrication.

As Hilpinen allegorizes: Both the clothes a tailor makes and the scraps a tailor produces have been called artifacts by different people for different reasons. And in this way *artifact* has become its own homonym and antonym. I would argue that this instability, or turn in the discourse of artifact studies, does *itself* most resemble the latter *kind* of artifact. But the more salient point is that this question reveals intentionality as the limit for our recognition of the artifact. There can be no such recognition, except on one or the other side of intention.

Closely related to the question of authorial intention, is a secondary question of prosthesis. Some, but certainly not most, scholars of the artifact have proposed that we qualify authorial intention by recognizing it specifically as the intention to make a thing *for use*. According to this line of thought, all artifacts are also prostheses through which one acts on the world, and it is this praxis, made possible by the object, and not the mere employment of the object – not the mere keeping busy and in motion of the object - that makes it an artifact.

In the fields of both disability studies and art studies this operation works backwards as well as forwards. The act of using a literal prosthesis to create an artwork might not have the intention of creating an artwork, but it can constitute the prosthesis as an artifact by putting it in use.

El Paraíso en la otra esquina dramatizes these features of authorship by

representing Flora Tristán's books as objects that the author creates through the force of her will, that cannot be reduced to an effect of the writer's meager education, and that come to make up a part of her praxis in a way that gloriously over-determines the course of her life.

The second characteristic of the artifact is its definitive place in the semiotic environment. Contemporary philosophy of technology differentiates the artifact from other modified natural objects by insisting upon the impossibility of the return of the artifact to the material world. To illustrate this point, artifact studies commonly employs the following just-so-story:

Many species besides human beings modify natural objects and use these as tools. But this is not a semiotic act. These objects, once modified, may be discarded and return again to the physical environment. Consequently, when an anthropologist describes an object that an animal used as a tool (a lure, a spear, etc.) he does not refer to it as *a lure* or *a spear* but calls it a stick used for "reaching" or a "spear" in quotation marks. (This pattern of usage is exemplified in the writing of Shumaker, 2011). On the other hand, an artifact is precisely that which can never be discarded or return again to the physical environment. A stick once used as a lure by human hands will always be a lure. (Leino, 2012). The common language of anthropology affirms that, while any *one* can create tools, only *permanent residents* of the semiotic environment can create artifacts.

This premise constitutes an essential predicate for a Marxian philosophy of alienation (Ihde, 1990). It should be specified, though, that it is not clear whether the moment of alienation that this premise imagines, in which an object becomes nonreturnable to its physical environment, belongs to history or to mythology. That is,

whether the production of a lure takes place sequentially, occurring over and over again every time a new lure is made; or whether, these mundane events are merely reiterations of an original alienation that constitutes a mythological event: the expulsion of Adam and Eve from a pre-semiotic garden.

El Paraíso en la otra esquina represents its main characters as traumatized by this expulsion. In one scene that I examine closely in this chapter - which is the scene in which Tristán/Vargas Llosa treat the London finishes - Tristán uses her writing to represent a chain of diabolical semiotification/implementation of objects. The novel thus posits that Tristán's own writing becomes a tool with which to do battle with other tools that are in use.

Finally, a third, recently theorized characteristic of the artifact is its static presence with relation to the assemblage and dis-assemblage of technologies, including machines, social systems and discourses. This is a premise that arises as the common language of positivist discourse meets that of contemporary hermeneutics. Hilpinen explains that, "in experimental science, the expression 'artifact' is sometimes used to refer to experimental results which are not manifestations of the natural phenomena under investigation, but are due to the particular experimental arrangement, and hence indirectly to human agency" (2011). In contemporary hermeneutics and especially hermeneutics after the book, "experimental results," can be replaced with "experiential results": Thus, for example, the semiotician O.T. Leino may refer to computer games and "the ways in which the materiality of the computer game artefact shapes the phenomenon of gameplay" (2012).

In both these formulations, the term artifact or artefact refers to something not

necessarily accidental, but *extra* to the assemblage through which the experimenter or experiencer acts and understands. Implicit is the idea that, by virtue of already being in excess, the artifact cannot be simply deconstructed with the assemblage. This idea corresponds with the generally accepted notion that one final characteristic of the artifact is its potential intact movability.

El Paraíso en la otra esquina dramatizes the intact movability of the texts of Flora Tristán through long-quotation, and hyper-quotation. Large passages of text are reproduced with almost word for word accuracy, and stand out from the greater text of the novel.

To sum-up: Authorship, transfiguration and excision define the phenomenology of the book in *El paraíso en la otra esquina*. The novel revalidates the concept of the author by insisting upon Flora Tristán as the material fact that precedes her books and by not admitting or dramatically exploiting any difference between Flora Tristán – her biological self, her experience and her way of thinking - and her books. It stages the transfiguration of the book - text to book - as the major significant event that takes place in the novel. Positing, in turn, this new text as book as a tool of confrontation in a semiotic environment filled up with diabolical tools. And finally, it reproduces the book as a limit, something that cannot be deconstructed with its assemblage, something that is destined to survive even this analysis of Vargas Llosa's novel.

In the next part of this chapter I will explore Vargas Llosa's reproduction of three of Tristán's books, *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, *Paseos en Londres* and *La Unión obrera*, and how, in each case, this reproduction produces some or all of these phenomena.

Peregrinaciones de una paria 1838/2003

Flora Tristán was born in 1803 to Therese Anne Pierre Laisnay and Mariano de Tristán y Moscoso. Her mother was a French war refugee and her father a Peruvian colonel in the Spanish army. The two met in Bilbao and were married in a religious ceremony. Four years later, Mariano de Tristán died and Flora and Therese were plunged into misery. As a teenager in Paris, Flora began working as a colorist for a lithographer, Andrés Chazal. She married Chazal soon after meeting him and, in short order, had three children by him. However, after the birth of her last child, she abandoned the marriage, fleeing Paris to work as a maid in England. Her husband immediately brought criminal charges of abandonment against her in France.

In 1833, Tristán, almost thirty years old, attempted to repair both her financial and legal situation by traveling to Arequipa, and meeting her Peruvian family. There, she sought her paternal inheritance, which was in the hands of her father's brother, Pío de Tristán. She was ultimately denied on the grounds that there was no contract of civil marriage between her parents, but her journey formed the basis of her first book, *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, which she published upon returning to Europe. The book, part memoir, part travelogue, and part political manifesto, turned Tristán into an overnight celebrity in Europe and a pariah in Peru.

A rich tradition of scholarship and literature now exists around *Peregrinaciones* in Peru. The contemporary incarnation of this tradition begins with the complete

translation of *Peregrinaciones* in 1946 by the writer Emilia Romero de Valle.⁶⁴ The Peruvian historian Jorge Basadre wrote a preface to this translation, in which he affirms that he possesses an ongoing relationship with *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, having begun his career with an article based on a lost, 1925, translation by Jorge Guillermo Leguía. Basadre's introduction contains many bio-bibliographic details about Tristán that Mario Vargas Llosa distills in his own preface to a 2005 republication of Romero's translation. More importantly, Basadre's introduction contains negative judgments about Flora Tristán's writing that Mario Vargas Llosa has Flora Tristán confront in his novel.

The most stunning (of multiple examples⁶⁵) is a judgment about letters that Flora Tristán wrote to her husband, Andrés Chazal before they were married. According to Basadre, Tristán's letters refute the idea that she puts forth in *Peregrinaciones de una paria* that she married under duress: "Parece inverosímil la afirmación de Flora de que este matrimonio fue impuesto por la madre (de ella) ... más bien hay, de esa época, apasionados documentos suyos dirigidos a Chazal, **sólo seis años mayor que ella, escritos sin freno y sin ortografía**" (I). Here, Basadre focuses on the idea that the letters were romantic in sentiment, and adds a barb about Tristán's off the cuff style of prose and poor spelling.

⁶⁴ Romero's career has been largely eclipsed by that of her husband, Rafael Heliodoro Valle. One wishes that the 1946 edition of *Peregrinaciones* included a note by the translator. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20138880?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

⁶⁵ For instance, Basadre calls Flora Tristán's novel, *Méphis* (the only work of fiction that Tristán ever produced) "una novela filosófica y social, llena de truculencia romántica, con un argumento largo e inverosímil ..." (X) To which Mario Vargas Llosa's second person narrator appears to reply, "And you wrote *Méphis* ... a novel which few people read and the critics judged dreadful. (Maybe it was. You didn't care. What mattered was not an aesthetic that lulled people into pleasant slumber but rather the reform of society)" (17).

Basadre's critique is exaggerated but recognizable in Vargas Llosa's novel. Here it appears imbedded in the novel's second person narration:

Y sin embargo, Florita idiota ... después de aquella repugnante violación escribiste a Andrés Chazal esa carta que el miserable haría pública diecisiete años más tarde, ante un tribunal de París. Una esquela mentirosa, estúpida, con todos los lugares comunes que una muchacha enamorada debía decir a su amante después de ofrecerle su virginidad. ¡Y con tantas faltas de ortografía y de sintaxis!" (49)

But the novel's second person narrator constructs a sophisticated apology for these letters within the quotation. He* insists that these were not manifestations of genuine affection, but of a traumatic response to an initial sexual encounter with Chazal that was equivalent to being raped. If the writing in the letters was cliché, it was cliché precisely because it was compulsory, or even compulsive. It was compelled within a major, hegemonic mode of storytelling: "Por qué se la escribiste si te habías levantado muerta de asco de aquel chaise-longue? Porque eso hacían en las novelitas las heroínas desfloradas."

In this context, what was originally Basadre's critique appears, narrated in the second person, to be Flora Tristán's self-critique. But it is also made to appear ridiculous as it focuses on the stylistic faults of the writing - its poor spelling and syntax, and even its substitution of romantic clichés for truth - to the exclusion of the interpersonal context in which the writing was completed. This exaggerated critique is thus performatively self-abusing, making the point that Flora Tristán's claim to have been forced into marriage and her representation of reality in general in *Peregrinaciones de una paria* is accurate.

El paraíso en la otra esquina suggests the possibility of receiving *Peregrinaciones de una paria* as a radically accurate book. That is, as a book that does not admit any difference between itself and the author or her intent. In this section of this chapter, I continue to explore this suggestion by focusing specifically on examples that intersect with Tristán's sexuality.

This is, obviously, not a comprehensive discussion: The highlights of *Peregrinaciones* are manifold: Tristán's voyage across the Atlantic, during which the captain of the ship on which she was traveling fell in love with her; Her impressions of her family in Peru, as the embodiment of early nineteenth century Criollo society; Her testimony of the armed conflict in Peru between followers of Presidents Orbegoso and Gamarra, which includes a formal theorization of the institutionalization of war in Peru; And finally, encounters with individual female celebrities (or pariahs), whom she considered universal models for feminine subjection and resistance.

Based on the breadth and diversity of experiences had by Tristán during her brief journey (she was away from Europe for only two years), scholars have been able to produce a large amount of writing on the contradictions within *Peregrinaciones*. This academic writing often seems to benefit, stylistically, from the novelistic momentum that such tensions organically supply.

For instance, Francesca Denegri, in her study included at the beving of the 2005 edition of *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, identifies three things that Tristán actually chooses to keep secret, besides her letters to her husband. These include "la relación con su madre, la relación con su hija y finalmente, su propia sexualidad." (Page) In short, Tristán's entire orientation towards other women. Now, Denegri recognizes the political

impossibility of Tristán speaking to her own homosexuality in *Peregrinaciones*⁶⁶, but she emphasizes that today these omissions lend *Peregrinaciones* the sort of psychological depth that is inherently engaging to readers: “Hay preguntas que zumban ... en el oído del lector acerca de aquellas inconfesables ambiciones.” In short, Denegri appreciates and calls upon us to appreciate a narrative feature of Tristán’s writing that will attract potential 20th century readers to her memoir: mystery.

However, in his adaptation of each of these parts of *Peregrinaciones* for his novel, Vargas Llosa carefully disarms such aporia, reinscribing *Peregrinaciones* as the purest distillation of a mind unburdened by skepticism about its own intentions or destiny.

When Vargas Llosa’s Flora Tristán expresses shame about the content of *Peregrinaciones*, she qualifies and thus neutralizes her shame as a sacrifice necessary for the production of a praxis and of a corresponding text.

I explore these in the following examples, understanding that second person narration doubles as interior monologue.

In a first example, Flora expresses chagrin about content in *Peregrinaciones* that might have upset Zacharie Chabrié, the ship’s captain who fell in love with her, and who she profiled in her memoir:

¿Qué habría sido del buen Chabrié todos estos años? Nunca habías vuelto a saber de él. Tal vez había leído las *Peregrinaciones de una paria* y de esta manera conocido la verdadera razón por la que te serviste de esa fea treta para rechazar su

⁶⁶ As for the other omissions that Denegri mentions it is worth recognizing that a gendered split exists in Tristán’s *Peregrinaciones*. Tristán exposes the lives of her male family members and friends with a brutal, insensible candor: See for instance her profile of her uncle Pío Tristán and friend Zacharias Chabrié. It is as though Tristán does not understand there to exist any discursive contract of good faith between men and women.

amor. ¿Te habría perdonado? ¿Te odiaría todavía? (238)

Here, the second person narrator poses these questions in the context of a larger interrogation of Flora Tristán that explores the idea that there is a truth about her relationship with Chabrié that *Peregrinaciones* does not communicate directly. The narrator asks, for instance, if it is true that Flora Tristán never loved Chabrié: “Aunque nunca sentiste amor por él, lo cierto era, ¿no, Florita?” And the narrator also asks if it is true that that Flora Tristán never regretted toying with Chabrié’s emotions: “¿Te habías arrepentido, Florita ... de haber jugado ... con los sentimientos del buen Zacarías Chabrié?” (236 check)

Alone, these questions introduce a certain narrative tension, driven by an implied contradiction between what Flora thought and what she wrote. However, the second person narrator of *El paraíso* answers both these questions at once: “No te arrepentías? No.” And, “Nunca sentiste amor por él.” These answers defuse narrative tension.

This absence of narrative tension in *Paraíso* is not, however, a lack. It is necessary to the novel’s concept of praxis.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ None of this is to say that Vargas Llosa’s diegetic *Peregrinaciones de una paria* is actually a faithful reproduction of the real *Peregrinaciones de una paria*. It is not. For instance, consider the way that the novel represents a culminating episode from Tristán’s relationship with Chabrié. In the original text, Tristán pledges eternal friendship to Chabrié, who responds by breaking down in unhappy tears:

Esperaba lograr que M. Chabrié comprendiera que mi amistad le sería tan dulce como el amor ... – He decidido, le dije, que usted será mi amigo toda la vida ... ¿Y nada más? ... me preguntó con una voz emocionada. ¡Ah! ¡qué desgraciado soy! Continuó, dejando caer la cabeza entre las manos ... Al verle así, presa del dolor, pensaba en lo que me había dicho la víspera M. David: los hombres no aman a las mujeres sino por amor ... Desdeñan la amistad de las mujeres. (78)

In Vargas Llosa’s novel, Tristán also pledges eternal friendship to Chabrié. But, in the corresponding passage, Chabrié is crying not with disappointment but with illusion:

Ultimately, Tristán determines that it is not love that has led her to feel poignant emotions about her publication of *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, and her symbolic break with Chabrié, who may still have held an ideal version of her in his head. Rather it is the appreciation of the practical implications of publishing.

¿Cómo habría sido tu vida, Florita, si te casabas con Chabrié y te ibas a enterrar con él a California, sin volver a poner los pies en Francia? Una vida tranquila y segura, sin duda. Pero, entonces, nunca habrías abierto los ojos, ni escrito libros... (238)

After *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, there could never again be any contingencies in life. Rather, life, like her book, would emerge as an artifact of praxis.

This is not what happens to all authors, in the world depicted in *Paraíso*. For instance, the second person narrator compares the significance of Tristán's *Peregrinaciones* to the writing of George Sand.⁶⁸

Si no fueras como eras, Florita, hubieras podido convertirte en una gran dama, gracias a la popularidad de que gozaste algún tiempo gracias a Peregrinaciones de una paria y a la tentativa de asesinato. Serías ahora una George Sand, señora del gran mundo, halagada y respetada, con una intensa vida social... (364)

Here, the narrator acknowledges that *Peregrinaciones* was, briefly, quite a popular book. They also mention an episode in which Chazal, following the publication of *Peregrinaciones*, discovered Tristán and shot her on the street. They confirm that the public read, and even enjoyed, this shooting as a continuation of the personal drama that

The seaman was trembling ... so mortified by his forwardness ... You told him that you would always love him as the best of friends. In an impulse that would bring you trouble later, you took his face in your hands and kissed him on the forehead. Crossing himself, the captain of the Mexicain thanked God for making him the happiest man on earth. (English trans/replace later.)

⁶⁸ *Paraíso* downplays the extent to which Tristán felt disappointment about George Sand, and the lifestyle that the latter chose.

Tristán had begun to narrate in *Peregrinaciones*.

And yet, contrary to this public reading, which constituted *Peregrinaciones* as a confession, a transformation of Tristán's tragic past into a story for consumption, the second person narrator reads *Peregrinaciones* as a manifesto, one which predicts a life distinguished by unpaid praxis.

The structure of this reading exactly reproduces the structure of Tristán's reflections about Chabrié's hypothetical reading of her text. It is an if/then structure, hinging on the use of the conditional. If Flora had been different, then the significance of *Peregrinaciones* would be different. But once again, the narrator introduces this hypothetical only to dismiss it, and to affirm a singular narrated and lived reality.

Efraín Kristal, in his chapter on El paraíso en la otra esquina for the Cambridge Companion to Vargas Llosa, provides a description of the narrator's proximity to characters' consciousness.

Vargas Llosa's narrator oscillates Between a third-person descriptive mode and second-person singular voice, engaged in an intimate, ambiguous dialogue with his protagonists' consciousness: at times the narrator appears to raise his own unresolved questions regarding his character's aspirations. There are even moments in which the narrator encourages his characters to revisit some of their own experiences, with hindsight and a historical perspective that belong to him rather than to them. (132)

Kristal describes the labor of the second person narrator in El paraíso en la otra esquina as wholesome. He proposes that this narrator is a mediator. They work with both a theoretical third person – maybe Vargas Llosa, maybe Flora Tristán's superego - and a theoretical first person – the authentic Flora. And for Kristal, this is not just a formal mediation, what Franz Karl Stanzel has referred to as “mediacy”, the felt imminence of one or more harmonious or contradictory narrative voices, but also more importantly, a

moral mediation.⁶⁹ Because it is “empathy” imbuing. In conversation with the second person narrator, Flora Tristán reencounters the reflected self of her early books.

This is a misleading description of what occurs in the novel. To say that the narrator “encourages” Flora Tristán to “revisit” her experiences almost seems to suggest that the narration carries out some sort of psychoanalytic project. This doesn’t happen. Flora Tristán does not acquire any empathy for her reflected self, that version of herself reflected in her early works. Instead, she appreciates the practical necessity of her early works. And this appreciation is not a factor of any process. Instead, it is itself a practice. Each if/then statement that the second person proffers about Tristán’s early work is an iteration of a previous if/then statement.

Miguel Oviedo, writing for the Guatemalan literary review, *Luvina*, provides a more accurate description:

(En *El paraíso en la otra esquina* hay un) recurso narrativo también reconocible en el repertorio técnico del autor: **la constante interiorización de la experiencia que los personajes viven al desdoblarse y dialogar consigo mismos en segunda persona**. Pero hay una notoria diferencia con los moldes narrativos habituales en el Vargas Llosa de (su) primera época, cuando el estilo instintivo y de altísima carga dramática otorgaba a sus novelas un clima de arrolladora tensión. Aquí la acción, en sí misma vasta y compleja en grados y niveles muy distintos, está narrada a través de reflexiones o recuerdos de los personajes; es decir, desde los remansos de su conciencia, lo que agudiza su cualidad reflexiva, propia del ensayo.
(http://luvina.com.mx/foros/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=806&Itemid=50)

⁶⁹ Franz Karl Stanzel, who affirms the expansion of the definition of the parallel concept, “free indirect style”: “In recent decades the literary explanation of free indirect style has concentrated ... on its extrasyntactical aspects. More of the literary explanations of free indirect style today agree in assuming that the essence of free indirect style lies in the dual view of the events from the perspective of the narrator and from that of a fictional character” (Stanzel 191).

Oviedo identifies the second person narrative mode explicitly as one in which Flora Tristán dialogues with herself. However, although he says that this mode constitutes a form of interiorization (“interiorización”), he clarifies that the effect is one of untwining (“desdoblarse”) rather than intimacy. Moreover, Oviedo compares this narrative mode with ones preferred by Vargas Llosa in his earlier, historical fiction, by specifying that it does not work to create dramatic tension, but rather, to qualify *Paraíso* as a “novela-ensayo-crónica de la utopía”. Here, Oviedo is less negative than critics writing in English.⁷⁰ While the novela-ensayo-crónica does not contain a lot of dramatic tension, it does testify to the praxis of its author, and the author’s sources. Oviedo hints that this quality actually furthers, perhaps even completes Vargas Llosa’s literary project.

Oviedo’s description of the second person narrative mode in *Paraíso* does not explicitly recognize dialogue as a form of intertextuality. But it is still the most comprehensive description available. It especially exceeds Kristal’s description by considering utopia as a referent of this dialogue, without recurring to explanations that hinge on empathy, something that isn’t really created by the second person in the text.⁷¹

⁷⁰ See, for example Michael Dirda’s Book Review in the Washington Post: “Vargas Llosa certainly knows everything about the nature of fiction, but that doesn’t preclude making misjudgments. To evoke the obsessive quality of Flora and Paul’s views of the world, he never quits their consciousnesses. As a result, *The Way to Paradise* gains textual intensity but must also settle for a kind of narrowness and claustrophobia ... As narrative *The Way to Paradise* is virtually inert. The book loops backward and forward in time to describe the lives of its protagonists, but almost as though this were experimental biography, not fiction.” And also Alfred Hickling’s Book Review in *The Guardian*: “Ultimately, however, it is these tensions and contradictions within Gauguin that make him the more fully realized fictional creation. This is also a matter of circumstance - the local colour of the South Sea islands is invariably richer than Flora’s endless itinerary of dour workers’ meetings, which invariably begin to merge into one another after a while.”

⁷¹ Kristal on empathy: Vargas Llosa used to treat his fanatics and eccentrics at a remove, with distance and reserve, sometimes with a measure of irony or even contempt. In *The Way to Paradise*, he presents his fanatical protagonists with more indulgence, greater

A Shameful Excerpt/Exception

There is an exception to the pattern by which Flora Tristán expresses shame about her writing in *Peregrinaciones de una paria*. It is an exception that, I think, proves the rule. Because it doesn't use the self-deflating if/then structure that the examples I explore above use.⁷² Instead, it seems to function as a straightforward statement of regret. Here, Tristán regrets using dehumanizing language to describe the African slaves whom she sold during her journey across the Atlantic.

En el libro que publicaste en 1838, *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, contando aquel viaje al Perú, en el relato de tu paso por La Praia incluías aquellas frases sobre <<el olor a negro, que no puede compararse con nada, que da náuseas y que persigue por todas partes>> de las que nunca te arrepentirías bastante. ¡Olor a negro! Cuánto habías lamentado después esa imbecilidad frívola... No era el <<olor a negro>> lo repugnante en aquella isla, sino el olor a la miseria y la crueldad... Pese a todo lo que habías aprendido en materia de injusticia, todavía eras una ignorante cuando escribiste las *Peregrinaciones de una paria*. (180)

In this one case, if in no other, it does appear that, as Kristal says, “the narrator encourages his characters to revisit some of their own experiences, with hindsight and a historical perspective that belong to him rather than to them.” Here the implicit third

empathy and less distance ... Indeed, there is a clear parallel Between Vargas Llosa's fictional account of Flora Tristán's courageous, but failed attempt to launch a political movement in the novel and his autobiographical account, *A Fish in the Water...* of his own unsuccessful effort to establish ... apolitical party during the Peruvian presidential campaign of 1990. ← Save for part about praxis in the moment. This is incorrect because VLL's Tristán's late texts are not failed texts in the diegesis. / Or empathy

⁷² This pattern is repeated in the if/then statement that suggests shame about the way that Tristán deceived her uncle: ¿Qué cara habría puesto don Mariano de Goyenche, leyendo, en *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, la verdad sobre los embustes que le hiciste tragar? ¡La sobrinita pura y cándida, a la que le pagó un pasaje al Perú, resultó ser una madre indigna, perseguida por la policía! (140)

person narrator, who Kristal always refers to as male, seems to overpower the implicit first person narrator. “He” does not give her the opportunity to rationalize her outrageous failure to produce a morally acceptable abolitionist discourse. Nor does “he” allow himself the luxury of simply leaving that discourse out of the narration.

And yet, the inclusion of this critique of racist discourse in *Peregrinaciones* is only possible because it is plausible that Flora Tristán, in the diegetic present, could recognize her mistake.

Contrastively, *Paraíso* does not incorporate the problematic racial discourse that Tristán used to talk about Andean peoples in *Peregrinaciones*.

The real Flora Tristán wrote that the essential difference between Andeans and Europeans was more meaningful than the difference between all other castes. Andeans were an exceptional species, defined first and foremost by their indisposition towards slavery. In *Peregrinacions de una paria*, Tristán compares the Incan to his beast of burden, the Llama. The llama, she says, is unique because if it realizes that it is being worked – for instance, because it sees that a load has been placed on its back - it will actually collapse and die. (210) Incans, similarly, cannot become conscious of their labor and live. And for this reason, a proletariat Incan class will never exist.

Tristán’s beliefs about the constitution of Incans, and indigenous Americans in general, were representative of those held by natural philosophers in the 18th and early 19th centuries. They can be traced back to propositions made during the debates at Valladolid in the 16th century. However, Tristán was almost certainly one of the first, if not the first person to re-inscribe these beliefs inside of a socialist discourse, or to attempt to project the future of Peru under capitalism on the basis of the ethnic characteristics of

its indigenous population. Here, it seems likely that Tristán viewed the existence of such a caste as a challenge to the very existence of capitalism as an eternal, global phenomenon.

Vargas Llosa does not call the reader's attention to these quaint attitudes even when he quotes passages from *Peregrinaciones* in which they are explicit.

Take, for instance, the following passage from *Peregrinaciones*. It develops Tristán's profile of the Incans, positing extreme levels of sexual dimorphism between men and women. Tristán believes that Incan women, represented here by the *rabonas* – *soldaderas* accompanying the army – possessed all of the capacity for conscious labor that Incan men lacked. Thus, the existence of the Incans, as a race that could not be incorporated into a capitalist system was actually made possible by the Indian woman.

Cuando el ejército está en marcha, es casi siempre del valor y de la intrepidez de estas mujeres que lo proceden de cuatro o cinco horas, de lo que depende su subsistencia. Cuando se piensa en que, además de llevar esta vida de penurias y peligros cumplen los deberes de la maternidad, se admira que puedan resistir. Es digno de notar que, mientras el indio prefiere matarse antes de ser soldado, las mujeres indígenas abrazan esta vida voluntariamente ... No creo que se puede citar una prueba más admirable de la superioridad de la mujer en la infancia de los pueblos. (280)

In Vargas Llosa's novel, the second person narrator explores this passage in dialogue with Tristán in the context of her sexual discourse, not her racial discourse. "His" interest is, specifically, Tristán's position on prostitution. And the question, which he asks indirectly, is whether this position was stable throughout Tristán's life or whether *Peregrinaciones* evidences, if not an evolution of her philosophy, then at least an incident of subvocalization: A moment when she wrote unconsciously and the message of her text threatened to exceed her own thoughts.

Tu odio a la prostitución era de larga data y tenía que ver con el disgusto y la repugnancia que, desde tu matrimonio con Chazal y hasta conocer a Olympia Maleszewska, te inspiraba el sexo.... Y sin embargo, en Arequipa, por primera y única vez en su vida, durante la guerra civil entre orbegosistas y gamarristas que le tocó presenciar en los primeros meses de 1834, Flora llegó a sentir por las rabonas, que, a fin de cuentas eran una variante de las ramera, respeto y admiración. Y así lo escribiste en *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, en el encendido elogio que hiciste de ellas. (272)

This excerpt is representative of passages in *Paraíso* in which intertextuality allows the reader to take great leaps in space and time. It traces Tristán's aversion to heterosexual penetrative sex back to her marriage to Chazal, forward to her affair with her friend, Olympia Maleszewska, and then checks it against what she wrote in *Peregrinaciones* about the rabonas, who it says were "a fin de cuentas ... una variante de las ramera." It contains marked, vertiginous shifts between second and third person.

The ultimate effect of this passage is not to use intertextuality to suggest psychological tension, or development, but to document, with performative objectivity, the details of Tristán's discourse.

Paseos en Londres 1840/2003

Tristán would come to explore the labor of prostitution most thoroughly in *Paseos en Londres*, a book she wrote after returning to France, on the heels of *Peregrinaciones*' success. In 1939, Tristán travelled to London, where she had briefly worked as a maid in her twenties, to conduct a sociological investigation of the state of the British proletariat. However, many of her contemporaries suspected that Tristán wanted to reclaim London, for her reinvented self. Moreover, many of her contemporaries suspected that Tristán

was, at heart, a French nationalist, and that her book would serve as anti-British propaganda. The actual text that she wrote does little to dispel these suspicions. Charles Dickens, referring to Tristán's descriptions of prostitution in *Paseos*, complained at the time: "What have I and my compatriots ever done to Madame Flora Tristán, that she should be so fierce and wrathful? And where, for goodness' sake, has Madame Flora been, to have ever stumbled upon the sights which she so graphically describes?" (143)⁷³

Vargas Llosa chooses to focus on *Peregrinaciones* as the book that might have made Flora a celebrity, and in *Paraíso*, his narrator gives the impression that *Paseos* was ignored upon its publication in France. But in reality, *Paseos*' harsh treatment of British society helped it to become a very successful publication, going through four editions total.⁷⁴ However, *Paseos en Londres* deserves to be read, today, not as an artifact of French xenophobia, or of the xenophobia inherent in early continental socialism, but as one of the first comprehensive, phenomenological critiques of penetrative heterosexual sex under capitalism. And it is exactly what Dickens called the "graphic" aspect of the book, its description of specific violations of prostitutes' bodies, which captures the attention of the second person narrator in *Paraíso*. Through second person narration, descriptions of the text of *Paseos* become the safe space in which Tristán can transform her own sexual shame. Eventually, sexuality in the quoted *Paseos en Londres* becomes formally grotesque; while imminent threats are located outside the quoted text, in the diegetic world. This is how *Paraíso* articulates the difference between text and world, the artifact status of *Paseos*.

⁷³ See Charles Dickens in *All the Year Round*. London: Charles Dickens, Nov. 17, 1860. 143.

⁷⁴ See Beik in *Flora Tristan, Utopian Feminist: Her Travel Diaries and Personal Crusade*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993

In *Paraíso*, the narrator's dialogues with Flora Tristán reveal that her personal sexual shame leads her to become heterosexually celibate and practice political lesbianism. *Paseos*, however, is depicted in *Paraíso*, as the book through which this partial celibacy, which up to this point only constitutes a form of self-defense, becomes total celibacy and a form of praxis.

The quotation of *Paseos* is unique in *Paraíso* because it is the largest quotation of any of Tristán's works in the novel. It spans nearly an entire chapter, titled *Ciudad Monstruo*, which is an adaptation of a chapter from *Paseos* called *Prostitutes*. *Prostitutes* is about what Tristán witnessed while touring neighborhoods in London where prostitution was endemic. The phrase "ciudad monstruo" is taken from a line in the original chapter, and was actually the title under which *Paseos* was republished in its 4th edition:

In the monster city there is no compassion for the victims of vice: the fate of the prostitute inspires no more pity than that of the Irishman, the Jew, the worker or the beggar. The Romans were no more indifferent to the fate of the gladiators who perished in the arena. (89)

Vargas Llosa begins *Ciudad Monstruo* in the diegetic present: Flora Tristán is in the south of France, which she experiences as a hellscape akin to Dante's inferno. (The playwright Juan Rivera Saavedra, remarked that Tristán's London Diary had caused him to think about Dante's inferno as well.) She takes refuge in memories of her affair with her friend, Olympia Maleszewska.

The second person narrator introduces this affair, framing it as a referent of letters that Tristán wrote to Olympia from London. Her affect towards these old letters inverts her affect towards the letters she wrote to her husband at the beginning of their

heterosexual relationship: She feels satisfaction instead of shame as she reflects on their composition and content.

Here, Vargas Llosa's second person narrator embellishes letters that the historical Tristán wrote to her friend, Olympe Chodzko. For instance, a letter in which Tristán wrote, "In my thoughts, I devour you with kisses" (Grogan, *Life Stories*, 145) is echoed in Vargas Llosa's novel, "I devour you with kisses and caresses in all my dreams."

Overall, in the letters that are quoted in *Paraíso*, it is clearer that Tristán is in a lesbian relationship with Olympia than it is in her real letters. Also, these diegetic letters portray Tristán as being pursued by Olympia, when, in reality, it seems that it might have been Tristán who pursued Olympia, or who at least pushed Olympia to articulate the possibility of women experiencing romantic love for other women. Moreover, the real Tristán's letters are more egotistical than the ones quoted in *Paraíso*. In one of these real letters, Tristán reflects that she may be too insatiable to be satisfied by the love of either sex. Whereas in *Paraíso*, the narrator posits that Tristán could barely process the overwhelming joy that homosexual sex provided her with.

In *Paraíso*, this possible inversion and definite elision make it easier, at the beginning of the chapter *Ciudad Monstruo*, for the narrator to foreshadow the significance of *Paseos* for Tristán's praxis. Ultimately, *Paraíso* uses quotes from *Paseos* to make credible the idea that Tristán became, through her own phenomenology-through-writing, a socialist on a different level, so that after the event of this book, she would never again enjoy the society that *Peregrinaciones* had secured for her. Susan G. Krogan says that after *Peregrinaciones* Tristán traded the life of a "socialite" for the life of a

“socialist” (145). But here, in Vargas Llosa’s novel, with *Paseos*, we see her going further, eschewing private as well as public friendship.

Paraíso’s narrator also foreshadows, at the beginning of *Ciudad Monstruo*, Tristán’s phenomenology of prostitution by referencing her editor’s censorship of *Paseos*. I am not aware of any sources attesting to such censorship, in real life. But this detail foreshadows the graphic nature of the passages that Vargas Llosa quotes.

This detail does not, however, appear to function – as one might expect – to justify any embellishment of these passages on the part of the narrator. Because, while the version of these passages that appears in Vargas Llosa’s novel is unbelievably graphic, so is the original. Saavedra, after reading the original, remarked in his own diary, “Ahora no sé quién o quiénes fueron más corrompidos: ¿Calígula, Nerón, o los ingleses...?” (113)

The very honorable members of Parliament remove their coats, untie their cravats, take off their waistcoats and braces ... The orgy rises to a crescendo; between four and five o'clock in the morning it reaches its height ... What a worthy use these English lords make of their immense fortunes ... (they) offer fifty, even a hundred guineas to a prostitute if she will lend herself to all the obscenities that drunkenness engenders. For in a finish there is no lack of entertainment. One of the favorite sports is to ply a woman with drink until she falls dead drunk upon the floor, then to make her swallow a draught compounded of vinegar, mustard, and pepper; this invariably throws the poor creature into horrible convulsions, and her spasms and contortions provoke the honorable company to gales of laughter ... Another diversion much appreciated at these fashionable gatherings is to empty the contents of the nearest glass upon the women as they lie insensible on the ground. I have seen satin dresses of no recognizable color, only a confused mass of stains: wine, brandy, beer, tea, coffee, cream etc., daubed all over them in a thousand fantastic shapes – the handiwork of debauchery! (Tristán, 86)

En los finishes, las verdadera diversión no era la cama ni el látigo, sino el exhibicionismo y la crueldad. Comenzaba a las dos o tres de la madrugada, cuando lores y rentistas se habían quitado chaquetas, corbatas, chalecos y tirantes y empezaban las ofertas. Ofrecían guineas lucientes y contantes a las mujeres – muchachas, adolescentes, niñas – para que bebieran las bebidas que ellos les preparaban. Se las embutían en el estómago, regocijados, festejándose unos a otros en corros estremecidos por las carcajadas. Al principio les daban a beber ginebra, sidra, cerveza, whisky, cognac, champagne, pero, pronto, mezclaban el alcohol con vinagre, mostaza, pimienta y peores porquerías, para ver a las mujeres que, con tal de embolsillarse aquellas guineas se bebían los vasos de un tirón, caer al suelo haciendo muecas de asco, retorciéndose y vomitando. Entonces, los más ebrios o perversos, entre aplausos, azuzados por los corros, se abrían las braguetas y las meaban encima o, los más audaces, se masturbaban sobre ellas para enmellarlas con su esperma. (Vargas Llosa, 404)

In Vargas Llosa's long quotation of this passage I perceive a *carnavalesque* element that has been frequently attributed to depictions of rape in the novelist's greater body of works.⁷⁵ The description of the way that the politicians poison the prostitutes and then defile them while they are being sick shares elements with descriptions of rape found in Vargas Llosa's earlier novels. One clear example is the rape of Bonificacia in *La casa verde* (1966). Another controvertible example is the rape of Sebastiana in *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981). Both of these describe the presence and participation of a community - a gang, tribe or family unit - in the violation of a woman's body, as well as the exploitation of physiological processes that are not universally considered to be sexual in nature, such as elimination and regurgitation. And although these earlier descriptions were not quotations, they still possessed a mimetic quality. They were a tribute to an aesthetic that had been developed by José María Arguedas, whose own

⁷⁵ The only thing missing is a cuttlefish of nightmares.

descriptions appropriated a picaresque aesthetic of rape, and developed it within a humanistic discourse, revalidating the figure of the Indian, the woman and the child.

This description of rape, however, is unique in two ways. It does not, as Kristal says, encourage Tristán to revisit her own experiences, with hindsight and a historical *perspective* that belong to Vargas Llosa. Instead, it encouraged Tristán to revisit her experience with a historical *taste* that belongs to Vargas Llosa rather than to her. And yet, because this description does not really add anything to what was already in Tristán's own description, what emerges is not a victory of the third person over the first, but a perfect synthesis of two voices. Also, in this passage, Vargas Llosa is no longer paying homage to José María Arguedas, but rather, to himself. Having found a point in Tristán's text where a nexus can be created between them, where he can impose his own aesthetic without displacing hers, Vargas Llosa can self-consciously parody himself.

This is the only place, by the way, in the portion of the novel dedicated to Tristán, that we see this carnivalism. While the portion dedicated to Gauguín is rife with it, Vargas Llosa does not introduce it to Tristán's portion other than here, where it seems to be conjured by Tristán's own prose.

Vargas Llosa's recapitulates and annotates his own quotation of this passage from *Paseos en Londres* just a little later on in the same chapter. Here he describes Tristán's persistent affect towards what she wrote in *Paseos en Londres*. The quotation begins with a reference to Tristán's ex-husband's rape of their daughter, Aline.

Nunca habías llorado tanto, Flora Tristán. Ni siquiera al saber que André Chazal había violado a Aline, lloraste como después de aquellas dos amanecidas en los finishes londinenses. Entonces decidiste romper con Olympia para consagrar todo tu tiempo a la revolución. Nunca habías sentido tanta compasión, tanta amargura, tanta rabia. Revivías esos sentimientos en esta noche desvelada de Carcassonne,

pensando en aquellas cortesanas de trece, catorce o quince años —una de las cuales hubieras podido ser tú si te raptaban cuando trabajabas para los Spence— atragantándose esas pócimas por una guinea, dejando que el veneno líquido les destrozara las entrañas por una guinea, permitiendo que las escupieran, mearan y regaran con semen por una guinea... ¡Dios mío, Dios mío, si existías, no podías ser tan injusto para quitarle la vida a Flora Tristán antes de que pusiera en marcha la Unión Obrera universal (408)

Here Flora, the French mother crying for the daughters of English women more than for her own biological daughter cuts, potentially, a transgressive political figure. The narration, however, does not take the expected route of highlighting this emotional and ethical tension. Instead, this instance of Tristán privileging the political over the personal is given as one in a series of instances in which she does the same. It is not different from them; it only offers to be different - because Vargas Llosa highlights it so spectacularly - and then rescinds that offer. In the very next sentence, the narrator tells us that Flora's pain led her to leave her lover, Olympia, whose comfort she realized was a bourgeoisie luxury. I sense that the narrator, that latent force that collates these quotations, is poking fun at (his) novel-subject and forcing the issue of the imminence of her discourse to her habit, and I recognize that this imminence is the sign of a praxis. A purer form of that discourse. The narrative betrays all of the apparatuses that I, as a reader, already have in place for understanding Tristán's discourse. I cannot attribute to Flora Tristán any ethics of care, or ethics of intimacy, based on her sex, because such an attribution would be a reference to an apriori, while the novel itself does not admit any apriori for Tristán's discourse. Tristán's discourse has the same absolute presence as her affect, which becomes *more unchanging* the closer the narrative brings me, with each new quotation, towards the diegetic present from which Tristán considers her books: "Revivías esos sentimientos en esta noche desvelada de Carcassonne, pensando en aquellas cortesanas de

trece, catorce o quince años.”

There remains a marginal question: Does the implied third person of the novel critique Tristán’s phenomenology of penetrative heterosexual as defunct, much like (he) does her belief in, for example, phrenology? - Tristán is ahead of her time in critiquing British jails but, ironically, is fascinated by phrenology - Or does (he) introduce it as an artifact, something that can move into a new space, and that can neither be refurbished nor deconstructed?

Both Flora Tristán’s abstinence and lesbianism constitute a form of *costumbrismo*, as opposed to praxis. They are recognizably the same abstinence or lesbianism as that of a series of defunct feminisms, including “messianic feminism” (e.g. Shaker feminism), “second-wave feminism” (e.g. the feminism of Andrea Dworkin) and “radical feminism” (e.g. the feminism of Mary Daly). They respond to the premises that 1) intercourse is harmful to women and 2) social and scientific technologies that aim to reduce or mitigate the harms caused by intercourse - through, for example, the establishment of consent, the cultivation of pleasure during sex, or the mitigation of specific medical risks implied by intercourse - reify that harm.

For my part, I recognize these premises as constitutive of extra-diegetic discourses whose promise has been neutralized. In fact, outside the novel, one witnesses that these premises now make up part of a *vulgar* discourse. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that they only seriously appeal to the academically disenfranchised; women whose feminist formation takes place outside of academia and who fetishize the least salient aspects – i.e. voluntary abstinence and political lesbianism – of the primordial feminisms that the movement’s foundational texts describe. But it is also due, on the

other hand, to the attempts of academically entrenched women to apologize for these aspects by teaching us to appreciate them as part of a movement's "rhetorical strategy." As rhetorical strategy they no longer *effectively* threaten to cut one off from the logos of love, connectivity and reproducibility.

As an artifact, Tristán's voluntary abstinence and political lesbianism escape this slide into vulgarity.

Afterwards : La Unión Obrera inside El Tour de Francia

After leaving Olympia, Flora Tristán begins a tour of France with her manifesto, *La unión obrera*. This book receives a unique treatment in *Paraíso en la otra esquina*. The novel does not quote from it directly, at all.

The elision makes sense if quotation, in *Paraíso*, is primarily a function of Tristán's internal monologue. In the diegetic present, Tristán is living with *La unión obrera*, not as a text, but as a book, as an artifact. It's weight, and the pressing necessity to physically disseminate it, displace discourse.

Actually, in the diegetic present, Tristán is living with *La unión obrera* exactly as she reports living with it in her diary, which is later published as *Le tour de France/El tour de Francia*.⁷⁶ The novel's treatment of *La unión obrera*, therefore doubles as an true quotation of *El tour de Francia*.

⁷⁶ *El tour de Francia* is published in Spanish for the first time in 2006. Ironically, the edition contains marginal notes that quote Vargas Llosa. For example, Vargas Llosa rationalizes Tristán's displacement of her daughter for her female prodigies. (209)

Paraíso does reveal some descriptions of socialist society, which are contained in *La unión obrera* and not in *El tour de Francia*. But it does so indirectly, by representing them in relief against a vulgar vision of socialist society possessed by France's workers. As she tours with her book, visiting workers meetings across France, Tristán is not depicted as lecturing or reading from her text out loud, but as arguing with these workers.

Tristán *precedes* Marx, but the novel represents the workers of France, anachronistically, as members of an already fatigued pre-socialist community. Or, alternatively, perhaps the novel posits the existence of a primordial fatigue in the movement; Because Tristán's back and forth with the workers very much resembles an exchange between one formally empowered and many vulgar interlocutors for socialism.

In any case, through these arguments (and also in a few conversations that are represented in the novel in which she complains about these arguments) the novel does give us some salient information about what Tristán had proposed in *La unión obrera*:

This included: 1. The professionalization of union activism through the creation of paid positions in the union for activists, and 2: The creation of several specific nontraditional leadership positions. These positions would be nontraditional in the sense that the type of "leadership" that Tristán envisioned was analogous to the ideal leadership of church officials. The union would have *apostles* and a chief *defender*, who would be chosen for their ability to proselytize.

But above all, these arguments serve to clarify that Tristán was convinced that revolution would hurt, rather than help the union's mission, and that the remuneration of women's labor was an essential predicate to its success.

There is one passage in *El paraíso en la otra esquina* that comes very close to quoting *La unión obrera* directly. This passage tells us that *La unión* does not describe what sexual relationships will look like in Tristán's socialist society: "En su proyecto de Unión Obrera no había recetas sexuales; salvo la igualdad absoluta entre hombre y mujeres y el derecho al divorcio, el tema del sexo se evitaba." (101)

However, this nearly direct quotation appears accidental: In this passage Tristán reflects, not on her own text, but on those of her contemporary, Charles Fourier. Here, the second person details the baroque sexual life of the phalansteries that Fourier envisioned. This is interesting, primarily, because Fourier appears to have been one of the first socialist thinkers to have proposed a sexual social service for the disabled, a controversial program that has reasserted itself in debates about sex-work and welfare in the 21st century.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ The real Charles Fourier (1772 – 1837) wrote that society should be organized into phalansteries that would provide individuals with a framework for the realization of their human potential. Fourier's utopianism is distinguished by the following ideas: That civilization represents the repression of common creative and ecstatic energies; That it frustrates the work that is the natural product of those energies; That all human beings should have access to all forms of occupation and be compensated for their work; And that the activity of childhood, including playful mimesis, constitutes work. Sexual energy, meanwhile, is conceived of as the play of adulthood: A creative and ecstatic energy meriting respect but also needing to be channeled, especially in the case of individuals who belong to one of several extreme sexual types. This leads Fourier to foresee the necessity of establishing a sexual social service. Generally speaking, Fourier's sexual socialism reflects early nineteenth century positivistic thinking about natural systems: It does not anticipate that the natural system constituted by society should have exponents or constituents that are doomed to be destroyed. (See Jonathan Beecher.) Vargas Llosa outlines almost all of these points, and more, on pages 99-101: En los falansterios ... habría jóvenes vírgenes que prescindirían por completo del sexo, y vestales, que los practicarían de manera moderada con los *vesteles* o trovadores, y mujeres todavía más libres, las *damiselas*, que harían el amor con los menstruales, y así sucesivamente, en un orden de libertad y exceso crecientes ... hasta las *bayaderas*, que practicarían el amor caritativo, acostándose con ... seres a los que ... la injusta sociedad actual condenaba a la masturbación o a la abstinencia." And he also imagines Tristán's

And yet, despite this negative or indirect trend of quotation, *La unión obrera* is, as the physical object that displaces discourse, represented more than almost any other book in *El paraíso*. While Tristán moves from one worker's meeting to another, *La unión obrera* is depicted, like the too tall tables it rests on, or the hard chairs that Tristán sits on, as an obstacle.

There are many descriptions of the practical hassles implied by the materiality of the book: Tristán, who has less than a year to live, is physically weakening and experiences great physical hardship as she carries dozens of copies of the book from one meeting to another, from one hotel room to another. If this hardship is lessened each time she gives her work away, then it is also renewed as she periodically visits her publisher to collect more copies.

In one scene in which Tristán is watching her book being printed (“vigilabas la impresión de aquellas páginas” (153), she encounters Karl Marx. This scene stages an imaginary encounter between Tristán, the socialist philosopher who anticipated Marx, and Marx himself, who quoted, but also maligned Tristán.

Both Saavedra and Vargas Llosa state that they are interested in how Marx and Tristán might have been linked by an inequitable quotational practice. Marx via Saavedra: “Flora muere en 1944. Años después Marx se apropia de la frase acuñada por Flora ‘Trabajadores del mundo uníos’, y nunca le reconoce su autoría. En su manifiesto le dedica un par de renglones, donde la califica despectivamente de socialista utópica” (90). Marx via Vargas Llosa: “Marx no sitúa nunca a Flora Tristán, y Engels – que aprovechó de una manera muy evidente el libro de Flora Tristán sobre Londres ... sin citarla nunca

response: “a Flora este sistema le parecía indebido, la hacía temer que, a su amparo, brotaran nuevas injusticias.” (101)

jamás - también conoció la obra de Flora Tristán. ¿A qué se debe?, me he preguntado muchas veces: yo creo que pura y simplemente al machismo.” (Enrique Krauze, 59)

In *El Paraíso*, the narrator dramatizes the resentments implied by this inequity. When Marx appears on the scene, and becomes irritated that the press has delayed printing his review, *Anales Franco-Alemanes*, he asks, “¿Por qué la imprenta ... privilegiar <<los alardes literarios de esta dama recién venida>>.” In short, Marx criticizes Tristán’s writing as a vanity project.

The narrator, however, imagines Tristán rebuffing her critic, Marx, on the basis of his linguistic homelessness:

- ¿Con qué derecho viene usted a dar esos frito de gallo capón? – El vociferante personaje masculló algo en alemán y, luego, reconoció que no entendió la expresión aquella. ¿Qué significaba <<un gallo capón>>?
- Vaya y consulte un diccionario y perfeccione tu francés – le aconsejó Madame-la-Colere, riéndose – Y aproveche para cortarse esa barba de puercoespín que le da aspecto de sucio.
- Rojo de impotencia lingüística, el hombre dijo que tampoco entendía lo de <<puercoespín>> (453)

Here, we see Tristán embrace and perform her linguistic nationalism. We learn that Marx is inept. He has been depending on his German friends, who are more fluent and better connected in France, to make and maintain connections. One of whom might, if not for a missed connection, have been Flora. Here, the second person narrator seems again to elide with that implicitly male, third person narrator, the one that Kristal describes as an avatar for Vargas Llosa. But at the same time, grounded as the second person narration is in Tristán’s interior monologue, it is also true that Vargas Llosa is using quotation to empower a confrontation between a spectral Tristán and a spectral

Marx. Key to this practice of quotation, is the appearance of *La unión obrera* as a physical object on the scene.

El paraíso treats the weight of the physical object of *La unión*, in *El paraíso*, as a corollary for the weight of the cross on Christ. In so doing so, the novel quotes, and also interprets, Tristán's *El tour de Francia*: The diary she kept during her tour.

In *El tour*, Tristán posits that she is the female Christ come to redeem the world in the way that the male Christ could not. If I may be forgiven for interjecting, now, a reference to my own experience as a private reader of Vargas Llosa's novel, I will say that in reading *Paraíso* this was the one completely loyal quotation of the historical Tristán by the narrator that I did not find transparent as such. That is, this claim appears so outrageous in *Paraíso*, and also so reminiscent of claims made by other characters in the works of Vargas Llosa, that I assumed that whatever figure of speech, metaphor or analogy Tristán may have used in *El tour* to inspire it, was wildly embellished by Vargas Llosa.

This is not the case. The historic Tristán is grandiosely deluded in *El tour de francia* and literally views herself as a female redeemer. This is content that Vargas Llosa has condensed in the first paragraph of his novel. Here, Vargas Llosa clearly marks his own quotation of Tristán with two time stamps: *Four in the morning* is when Tristán wakes up and experiences the serenity that comes with her awareness of herself as a *chosen one*, or *messiah*. *Ten years ago* is when Tristán awakened to this awareness for the first time.

No he tenido todavía tiempo para escribir una sola palabra. El 12 de abril, **a las 4 de la mañana, me levanté** para emprender la bella y noble misión para la que Dioses en toda su bondad me ha elegido. Sentía en mí como una gracia divina que me envolvía, me magnetizaba y me transportaba a otra vida. **No encuentro una expresión que pinte exactamente lo que pasaba en mí. Era algo grande, sublime, religioso, era por así decir, un entusiasmo llevado al apogeo, y por esto mismo arribé en un estado sobrehumano: la calma.** (Tristán, 85)

Oh! ¡Qué amor sublime! ... **Hace más de diez años que tuve el presentimiento de un amor semejante,** y hoy Dioses en toda su bondad ¡me ha hecho conocer la realidad de tal amor! (Tristán, 191)

Abrió los ojos a las cuatro de la madrugada y pensó: <<Hoy comienzas a cambiar el mundo, Florita>>. No la abrumaba la perspectiva de poner en marcha la maquinaria que al cabo de algunos años transformaría a la humanidad, desapareciendo la injusticia. **Se sentía tranquila,** con fuerzas para enfrentar los obstáculos que le saldrían al paso. **Como aquella tarde en Saint-Germain, diez años atrás, en la primera reunión de los sansimonianos, cuando, escuchando a Prosper Enfantin describir a la pareja-mesías que redimiría el mundo, se prometió a sí misma, con fuerza: <<La mujer-mesías serás tú>>.** ¡Pobres sansimonianos ... su fanático amor a la ciencia y su idea de que bastaba poner en el gobierno a los industriales y administrar la sociedad como una empresa para alcanzar el progreso! Los habías dejado muy atrás, Andaluza. (Vargas Llosa,

Tristán, in her real diary, couches her messianism within a nascent, implicitly Sapphic discourse. She feels affirmed as the female deliverer of the workers of France because her younger student, Eleanor Blanc has recognized her as such. But she also feels open to the possibility that Eleanor Blanc, whose love for Tristán and for the union is unpolluted by any encounter with men, could herself be a female messiah. Was Tristán conscious of her declining health? Did she grapple with the possibility that she might not live to complete her mission and that another woman would have to step forth? She writes:

Esta noche busqué comprender lo que (Eleanore) había sentido con respecto a mí y lo que yo misma había experimentado, y tuve la revelación de que un nuevo amor más grande y sublime que todos los amores conocidos iba a

eclosionar en la humanidad, ¡Oh! ¡Qué amor sublime! ... Hace más de diez años que tuve el presentimiento de un amor semejante, y hoy Dioses en toda su bondad ¡me ha hecho conocer la realidad de tal amor! ¡Eh! Cosa notable, es una mujer del pueblo, una niña, todavía – porque ella no ha amado – quien es elegida. (191)

In *El Paraíso* these possibilities are put aside so that the book, *La unión obrera*, can take the place of the women that Tristán claimed to have dwelled inside of:

Pasa entre Eléonore y yo lo que sucedía entre Jesus y San Juan. Vivía en su maestro porque su maestro tenía el poder de vivir en él. De la misma manera Eléonore vive en mí porque yo tengo el poder de encarnarme en ella. ¡Que hecho! Mi alma tomando posesión de otra alma sin tener en cuenta la envoltura. (193)⁷⁸

This book inverts our understanding of prologue or preface, such as has been supplied to us by post-colonialist deconstruction. When Gayatri Spivak asks “But what sovereign subject is the origin of the book?”, when she quotes Proust, “I was not one man only ... but the steady advance hour after hour of an army in close formation”, she affirms that the Derridian concept of the preface, as that which is pre-dicto, but not just before but also all around us all of the time, undermines

⁷⁸ This quotation continues in a way that calls to mind and inverts Tristán’s reflections, in *Peregrinaciones*, about the inadequacy of a woman’s love in friendship to men: Si este hecho ocurriera con respecto a un hombre se podría decir: esta posesión espiritual se operó en virtud del príncipe de atracción que atrae los sexos el uno hace el otro sin saberlo. ¡Pero aquí se trata de una mujer! He aquí un hecho que prueba más la existencia del alma que todas la teorías. Me acuerdo ahora de la cara que ponía su marido viéndola llorar. ¡La miraba con una sorpresa inaudita! No comprendía y sin embargo estaba celoso, sentía y comprendía que su mujer en sus demostraciones más afectuosas no lo había amado jamás de la manera en la que me amaba, ¡e intuitivamente comprendía también que no la amaría nunca con un amor tal! Y este pensamiento lo torturaba porque se sentía humillado. Tengo bellas cosas que decir sobre la eclosión de este nuevo amor en la humanidad, pero no tengo tiempo ahora. (193)

“humankind’s common desire for a stable center, and for the assurance of mastery – through knowing or possessing (that) a book ... stands to satisfy” (Of Grammatology).

The diegetic present, the action, that is coded in the material artifact of *Unión obrera* is certainly a preface in the Derridian sense to the discourse that is implanted in all of the flashbacks to text that make up the bulk of the novel. However, it betrays Spivak’s vision of what this kind of preface ought to do. No army of persons marches through this text. Or if one does, this is an army made up of persons so alike to one another (first, second and third person) that reading the novel is like attending a military parade and coming away with a case of line-hypnosis. On the other hand, if *La unión obrera* is not a prologue or preface, which is to say that if it is not true that action and represented discourse could hold a double referent, then there is still something to be learned from the disappearance of the content of *La unión obrera* at the “end” of this novel: Which is that, occurring simultaneously with the end of the novel’s *fabula*, with Flora Tristán’s death, we still find represented a simultaneous encounter between action and discourse in *El paraíso en la otra esquina*. It is merely the representation of the end of the scriptural *and* the end of the habitual as happening at the same moment.

Ultimately, it is impossible to reduce judgment in *El paraíso en la otra esquina* to an activity of the character Flora Tristán. Certainly, it is narratologically correct to attribute judgments like the one with which this chapter opens (“Escribiste a Andrés Chazal ...”) to Flora Tristán, to her inner monologue. But these judgments also have a historical life of their own that is not belied by the narratological operations that place them inside of inner monologue. And this is the chief methodological claim of this

chapter: The labor of considering how these judgments constitute the diegetic fiction is intensive and worthwhile. But this labor is not necessary, as a justification of the inclusion of such negative judgments, about a marginal woman writer's work, in a novel by a preeminent male writer. Firstly because there is no duty to excuse this gesture. And secondly, because the virtue of the novel is that it affirms the priority of these judgments, at the cost of its own vibrant potential.

BIBLIOGRAPHY CHAPTER III

- Beecher, Jonathan. *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Dickens, Charles. Ed. Charles Dickens. *All the Year Round*. London: Charles Dickens, Nov. 17, 1860
- Dirda, Michael. "Book Review: The Way to Paradise" *The Washington Post*. March 11, 2003
- Grogan, Susan K. *Flora Tristan: Life Stories*. London ;New York: Routledge, 1998
- Hickling, Alfred. "Trouble in Paradise," *The Guardian*. Nov. 14, 2003
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/nov/15/fiction.art> Access: March, 2016
- Hilpinen, Risto, "Artifact", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/artifact/>>. Access: March, 2016
- Ihde, Don. *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990
- Kristal, Efraín. *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006
- Oviedo, Miguel. "Mario Vargas Llosa en el Corazón del Colonialismo." *Luvina Foros*.
http://luvina.com.mx/foros/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=806&Itemid=50 Access: March, 2016
- Rivera, Saavedra J. *Obras Seleccionadas De Teatro*. Lima: Fondo Editorial, 2001
- Voces: Revista Cultural De Lima*. Lima, 2003.
- Sánchez, Luis A. *Una Mujer Sola Contra El Mundo: Flora Tristán, La Paria*. Lima: Ediciones Nuevo Mundo, 1961
- Shumaker, Robert W, Kristina R. Walkup, and Benjamin B. Beck. *Animal Tool Behavior: The Use and Manufacture of Tools by Animals*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011
- Spivak, Gayatri. *Introduction*. Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Stanzel, F. K. *A Theory of Narrative*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1984

Taipio Leino, Olli. "Death Loop as a Feature," *The International Journal of Computer Game Research*. Volume 12 Issue 2 December 2012

Tristán, Flora. *Paseos En Londres: Estudio Preliminar: Estuardo Núñez*. Lima: Biblioteca Nacional del Peru, 1972.

Paseos En Londres. Santa Fe, Argentina: El Cid Editor, 2009.

Peregrinaciones De Una Paria. Lima: Editorial Cultura Antártica, 1946.

Peregrinaciones De Una Paria, 1833-1834. Arequipa: Ediciones el Lector, 2003.

Tristan, Flora, and Yolando Marco. *Union Obrera*. Barcelona: Editorial Fontamara, 1977.

Tristan, Flora, and Yolanda Westphalen. *El Tour De Francia (1843-1844): Estado Actual De La Clase Obrera En Los Aspectos Moral, Intelectual Y Material*.

Tristan, Flora, Doris Beik, and Paul H. Beik. *Flora Tristan, Utopian Feminist: Her Travel Diaries and Personal Crusade*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993

Vargas, Llosa M. *El Paraíso En La Otra Esquina*. Bogotá: Alfaguara, 2003.

La Casa Verde. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1966

La Guerra Del Fin Del Mundo. Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1981

CHAPTER 4
PEDRO SALVINO ZULEN AYMAR
IN THE BURNING CHAPEL OF LANGUAGE

Para prender fuego a los ídolos encerrados en la capilla ardiente del lenguaje, bastóle la llama de la vida. Su herejía le ha atraído sobre sí la condenación de los escribas del intelectualismo, de ese intelectualismo... que... no ejecutó más tarea que de elevar los castillos triviales y efímeros de sistemas que se derrumbaban al menor soplo de la realidad. Pero frente a los escribas y al lado del pensador austero, cabalga un sinnúmero de papagayos, diletantes, amateurs, embrolladores en fin, que se ha apoderado de la doctrina del maestro, y hay el peligro de que se confirme la incisiva e irónica frase de David Hume: <<La victoria no es ganada por los hombres en arma que manejan la lanza y el sable, sino por los trompeteros, tambores y músico del ejército.>>

- Pedro Zulen, La filosofía de lo inefable

The early 20th century Tusán philosopher and poet Pedro Zulen is almost in vogue. Pablo Quintanilla recently profiled Zulen as a mediator for the introduction of North American pragmatism to Latin America. Joel Rojas, for the first time, has collected all of Zulen's prose in one volume, providing us with access to his scientific and science fiction writing. And Ignacio López-Calvo has brilliantly analyzed Zulen's career in the context of the trajectory of the Chinese Community in Peru, calling our special attention to the writer's poetry and suggesting that we reconsider it on its own terms, beyond its failure to conform either to stereotypes about Latin American modernist aesthetics or to the type of early 20th century romanticism practiced by *la generación de 1900*.

However, this chapter has a different trajectory: Pedro Zulen's double situation as a character in Dora Mayer's memoir, *Zulen y yo* (1925) and also in José B. Adolph's novelization of Mayer's memoir, *Dora* (1985). My investigation therefore has the dubious distinction of reintroducing into a nascent conversation about Zulen, two

lesser-known figures that attempted to intervene in the past to determine his legacy. I say dubious, because, while there is no doubt that Dora Mayer was unjustly assigned to intellectual oblivion by a patriarchal intellectual community, it is not at all clear that this fact balances out Mayer's ethically complicated treatment of Zulen in her memoir.

The full title of Mayer's memoir is *Zulen y yo, Testimonio de nuestro desposorio ofrecido a la humanidad*. It is, as its title declares, a first person testimony of the author and her subject's marriage, offered up to humanity. Mayer testifies that Zulen was her husband, although he never admitted to being married to her. In fact, legally, the two were not married. Mayer's claim hinges on the fact, as she tells it, that in 1920 Pedro visited her at her house, proposed "nupcias naturales" to her, and they consummated their marriage. Zulen maintained that this never happened.

Adolph, in order to write *Dora*, did two things: First, he recycled Mayer's testimony, directly transcribing some passages from her book into his novel and adapting others. Second, he invented a corresponding testimony, which belongs to Zulen.

Adolph's imagined testimony evokes two texts by Zulen: *La filosofía de lo inefable* and *Del Neohegelianismo al neorealismo*. These are Zulen's bachelor's thesis and postdoctoral manuscript, which focus on Henri Bergson and Bertrand Russell respectively, in which he developed his philosophy of practical idealism.

It is my position that the portion of Adolph's novel that is written from the point of view of Zulen should be read as a theorization of Zulen's pragmatism as an antidote for the disavowal of cultural pluralism in Peru at the end of the 20th century; Though an emergent goal of this chapter is also to show in relief Zulen's pragmatism, as it appears in itself. My chapter has three parts. The first concerns what Mayer said about Zulen. The

second what Zulen said in his philosophy, and the third, how Adolph imagines Zulen to have responded to Mayer.

Dora Mayer

Dora Mayer was born in 1868 in Hamburg Germany. Her father brought her to Peru when she was five. She was Lutheran, not Catholic, and she was educated at home by her stepmother, who it appears that Dora may not have known was her stepmother. She detailed her education in her *Memorias*, which were archived at the library at San Marcos in 1958, a year before her death. In 1992 *Memorias* was transcribed by Rosa Boccolini, Yolanda Candia, Rosario Jimenez and Miguel Pinto and printed in three volumes.

In *Memorias*, Mayer compared her career as a scholar to that of Zulen by saying that he read *everything*, while she only read journals. By *everything*, Mayer meant philosophy and literature. She also reflected, in a passage which now appears poignant given the topic of this investigation, that because of his reading habits Zulen was able to detect and unable tolerate even the slightest plagiarism. It is unfortunate for us that here Mayer chose to remain neutral and not divulge the specifics of any of Zulen's accusations towards other writers, although she does mention a conflict with Rivas Agüero.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ “Creo que fue después que Zulen disgustó a Rivas Agüero con una crítica de un detenido estudio de esto, asunto en que no me mezclo por falta de conocimientos de la materia. Además de diferencias de juzgamiento, Zulen era temido por los plagistas, pues leía tanto que nada de plagio se le escapaba.” (*Memorias*, Tomo III, 179) In this passage Mayer partially quotes herself in *Zulen y yo*.

In fact, Mayer's knowledge of Latin American journalism was a serious intellectual achievement in its own right. The sixth part of her *Memorias*, which is part of *Memorias de mi vida interior* is titled *Recuerdos periodísticos* and contains detailed information on over eighty distinct publications. This includes publications that Mayer herself worked on: "El Deber-Pro Indígena" (1912 – 1916), "La Crítica" (1917 0 1920), "Concordia" (1928-1929) and "El Trabajo" (1931 – 1934).⁸⁰ It also includes one publication that Pedro Zulen worked on after the dissolution of "El Deber-Pro Indígena" and his relationship with Mayer, aptly titled "Autonomía." However, what is probably most impressive about *Recuerdos* is its unparalleled account of the periodical activity of the Chinese, Japanese and Jewish communities in Peru at this time.

Still, the crowning achievement of Mayer's career was that, along with Pedro Zulen and Joaquín Capelo, she co-founded the Asociación Pro-Indígena, Peru's last and most important paternalistic *indigenista* institution. Within this triad, Mayer and Joaquín Capelo were most closely aligned ideologically because of their unwavering belief that legislative reform would restore indigenous Peruvians to their rightful place as full participants in civil society. Although both Mayer and Capelo were routinely disdainful of what they saw as legislative excesses, namely the suppression of the press, they never became openly antiestablishment and they both rejected romantic formulations of nationhood, including invocations of Tawantinsuyu, a once and future Incan nation state.

In this sense, the seeds of the dissolution of Mayer and Zulen's working relationship were planted originally in the Asociación Pro-Indígena. Because Zulen was sympathetic to the aesthetic, if not the practical message, of a discourse about a new

⁸⁰ Mayer's notes on Concordia are quite sad. She blames its failure on the a recession of the moral sentiments of her audience during the *Oncenio* of Leguía. (Tomo III, 101)

Tawantinsuyu, and because Zulen also believed that the urgency of dismantling the institution of the *latifundio* superseded the requirement that the progressive development of Peru's democracy had for *time*.

The memory of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, and its significance for the history of indigenismo was co-created, following the Asociación's dissolution in 1917, by both Dora Mayer and José Mariátegui. In September of 1926, a year after the death of Zulen, Mariátegui invited Mayer to contribute an article to the journal *Amauta*, in which she interpreted the meaning of the API: *Lo que ha significado la Pro-Indígena*.

Two months later, in December of 1926, Mariátegui followed up Mayer's article with an article of his own, *Aspectos del Problema Indígena*. Here, Mariátegui indirectly confronts Mayer's description of the efficacy of publicity ("publicidad"). Mayer had called "publicidad" ... "el eje de la acción de la Pro-Indígena" (21). She believed that publicity was a multipronged tool that could be used to disassemble the "ego" of a Peru that was deluded about the true nature of its treatment of its indigenous self.⁸¹ However, Mariátegui describes the efficacy of this kind of publicity as fatally contingent upon the corrupted sensibilities of criollo Peruvians. It thus amounted, in his consideration, to an experiment whose failure should have headed off the creation of the Patronato de la Raza. (A toothless state run institution for the management of Indian affairs.)

⁸¹ "La publicidad constituía en buena cuenta el eje de la acción de la Pro-Indígena. Era el temor a la sanción pública provocada por la publicidad el motivo que servía de freno a los abusivos y que inducía a los funcionarios gubernamentales y judiciales a ocuparse de la reclamaciones presentadas por la Asociación en nombre de sus defendidos; era la publicidad que daba a los lectores de periódicos una noción de los problemas relativos..." (21)

Ese experimento ha cancelado definitivamente la esperanza o, mejor, la utopía de que la solución del problema indígena sea posible mediante una reacción de la clase necesariamente mancomunada con el gamonalismo. El Patronato de la Raza, instituido por el Estado, está ahí para testimoniarlo con su estéril presencia.

Still, Mariátegui is more than gentle when he quotes Mayer in *Aspectos del Problema Indígena*. He praises her for having displayed both integrity and level-headedness by openly describing the API's last period of decadence. And he also characterizes *Lo que ha significado la Pro-Indígena* in a way that both recognizes the centrality of the figure of Mayer and Zulen's relationship to the text, while ignoring the bizarreness of Mayer's treatment of this relationship:

Recientemente, Dora Mayer de Zulen, cuya inteligencia y carácter no son aún bastante apreciados y admirados, ha hecho con la honradez y mesura que la distinguen el balance del interesante y meritorio experimento que constituyó la Asociación Pro-Indígena. La utilidad de este experimento resulta plenamente demostrada por quien fue, en mancomunidad y solidaridad habilísimas con el eneroso espíritu precursor de Pedro. S. Zulen, su heroica y porfiada animadora.⁸²

Mariátegui's practice of quotation of Mayer is protective, but misrepresents the content of *Lo que ha significado la Pro-Indígena*.

In *Lo que ha significado la Pro-Indígena*, Mayer reintroduces the central thesis of *Zulen y yo* (1925): That the efficacy of the association had owed to her and Zulen having assumed the role of a primordial dyad, the engenderers of a nascent Peruvian civilization. To illustrate this idea she relates the following anecdote: On Sunday the 8th of November, 1926 she was attending a play, where she was approached by four Indians:

⁸² Gerardo Leibner claims that Mariátegui over-relies on Mayer as a source for information about Zulen's activities within the API.

“Me saludaron titulándome su Mama Ocllo. Sentí, halagada en ese momento, que una idea en el exterior respondía a un pensamiento que abrigo en el interior.” (20)

Mayer tells us that most nations conserve the legend of a political founder who is either male or doubly male (as in the case of Romulus and Remus.) Peru, however, conserves the legend of Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo. This brother-sister, husband-wife dyad were, according to legend, the founders of the Inca state, and possibly the offspring of God. Mayer considers the heterosocial pair singular and superior in their potential to inspire a civilization: “el símbolo de la perfección social más completo dentro de los moldes de la vida humana ... no el hombre solo, no la mujer sola, sino una doble individualidad fundida en la maravillosa unidad del complemento.” (20)

Is it possible that these four Indians recognized Mayer as their Mama Ocllo? It seems as unlikely as Mayer’s assertion that at the same play an artist by the name of Teodomiro Figueroa referred to Zulen as Mayer’s “husband”. (Implied in “Tuve la inmensa satisfacción de escuchar referencia por el artesano ... a la obra redentora emprendida por mi esposo y continuada por mi.” (20)) On the other hand, it is clear that some members of the community, Mariátegui among them, made certain concessions to Mayer. While Mariátegui doesn’t mention Mayer’s mythology in his *Aspectos del problema indígena*, he does call Dora by her married name, Dora Mayer de Zulen. Mayer, against Zulen’s protests, had taken his name after their “marriage” in 1920. In fact, she published both *Zulen y yo* and *Memorias* under this stolen name.

In *Zulen y Yo*, Dora writes that in 1920, four years after the dissolution of the Asociación Pro-Indígena, Zulen visited her at her house, gifted her with a copy of *La filosofía de lo inefable*, proposed “nupcias naturales” and claimed a previously promised loan of 400 libras peruanas. She states, “Nuestro matrimonio privado ante Dios se verifica el 25 de junio.” (19) This was several days before Zulen was to travel to Harvard to study librarianship.

Mayer also records how, upon returning from Harvard to Peru in 1922, Zulen went to his mother’s house and not hers. Mayer, outraged, followed him there, and announced their marriage. This provoked a scandal. Zulen was, at the time, engaged to a woman his own age by the name of Céspedes and her family was forced to break off the engagement. For the rest of his short life, Zulen maintained that he had never proposed marriage to or had sex with Mayer. He died just a few years later, in 1925, at the age of just 36.

Although Zulen only had a few years to wrest back his name from Mayer, his peers had reasons to believe him. Previous to 1920, Zulen had been estranged from Mayer, and this was public knowledge. In fact, in *Zulen y yo*, Mayer herself describes how, after she first declared her love for him in 1915, Zulen rebuffed her. She says that from 1915 to 1920, he either did not respond to her advances, or rebuked them in the harshest of terms. His appearance in her house in June of 1920 was therefore, by her own admission, unprecedented.

Despite Mayer's invocations of mythological archetypes in *Zulen y yo*, her actual analytical project is positivistic. She intends to use gestaltpsychology to reveal "la verdad de Zulen": Which is that he was among the most virtuous men to have ever lived, but that he was also profoundly traumatized by this role. And that it was not him, but his subconscious that betrayed her and led him to deny their marriage. By accusing Zulen, Mayer endeavors to save him from a process of psychic fragmentation that began with his rejection of her.

The following quotes, from Adolph's *Dora*, and Mayer's *Zulen y yo*, conform her mission statement:

Nadie acusaba a Zulen, y yo lo acusé.
Nadie acusaba a mí, y yo me acusé a mi misma ...

Pero, ¿soy yo víctima y Zulen el verdugo ... ? No; Zulen sufre como yo, porque es solo un actor que representa al común villano humano, sin serlo. Zulen se ha prestado á encarnar voluntariamente, en un arranque de ironía sublime, la maldad humana ... (Zulen y yo, 4)

Yo acuso al hombre que amo. Y tengo que entablarle juicio, no en persecución de su condena, sino de su absolución ante la faz de la humanidad. (Dora, 19)

Mayer analyzes Zulen as a version of two archetypes: The sphinx and Oedipus. In the story of Oedipus, Mayer sees the sphinx as an alienation of Oedipus's own abilities to talk about the future of his civilization. Mayer says that Zulen, like Oedipus, became mute, unable to admit his "crime" – in this case, his marriage to her - when he became existentially conscious of his political effectiveness. He was paralyzed by the terrible possibility that he might succeed in his earthly labor to destroy the institution of the *latifundio* and to save Indigenous Peru. And so he sabotaged his relationship with her,

and the Asociación Pro-Indígena, where his labor was most likely to succeed. Mayer calls their Asociación, imitable, but initerable. “Volverán a formarse todavía Asociaciones Pro-Indígenas, pero la primera, con la enorme consagración de dos almas apoyadas la una en la otra por el amor, no volverá.” (39)

Interestingly, Mayer does not identify herself with the archetype of Oedipus’s mother, even though it was their physical relationship that supposedly destroyed Zulen, and even though Mayer was old enough to actually be Zulen’s mother. Instead, it appears that Mayer may have identified with Oedipus’s daughter: the virtuous Antigone. Because it is Antigone who interprets Oedipus’s otherwise inscrutable tragedy.

Mayer writes *Zulen y yo* shortly after its subject’s death. But she believes that her *gestaltpsychology* has the power to reverse the silence that exists in death. Because this is a limit to communication that Mayer does not accept.

This reversal is dramatized in *Zulen y yo* in several ways. First, *Zulen y yo* actually begins with a spectacular modernist vignette: A description of how Carlos V called for his own funeral to be celebrated before his death so that he could attend it. Mayer claims that she, in writing *Zulen y yo*, has both called for and attended the funeral of her own reputation. She stresses that if not for her announcements of her marriage, society would still understand her to be a maid, of impeccable virtue.

Further challenging the divide between life and death, Mayer records that after Zulen died she wrote to the Archbishop of Lima and demanded that he compel Zulen’s confessor to divulge the content of Zulen’s later confessions. She is sure that Zulen confessed to the marriage. She also demands that the Archbishop affirm the couple as married, post-mortem. She includes the text of this letter in the epilogue of *Zulen y yo* as

well as the archbishop's reply. (To us this reply now reads as pithy. But objectively, it is hard to see how the archbishop could have been kinder.)

Nada puede hacerse porque Zulen ha muerto. El secreto de la confesión es inquebrantable. (43)

Mayer laments that she does not belong to the Japanese culture, in which a man can marry his daughter to her fiancé's ghost. She also expresses interest in joining *la iglesia positivista*, which she thinks would be more sympathetic to her plight. (44)

However, at the end of her memoir, Mayer performs her own victory over death. She claims profound happiness in her positive knowledge of her relationship with Zulen. She says that she feels that she possesses, within herself, "*un tesoro*." (40) That she has bridged the gap between death and purgatory. That she is no longer vulnerable to the agony of death.

Zulen y yo is a testament to the pervasive impact that positivism, and modernist aesthetics had on the behavior of its author. To me, it is clear that Mayer, despite her geographic and gendered marginalization, felt that the tools of epistemology that were available to her in her time, were not only adequate to her task before her, that of reanimating Zulen's prose, and giving him a chance to repair the damage between them, but were more adequate than any that man, in previous centuries, had access to.

We can now appreciate that Mayer's true intellectual accomplishment was as a writer of a specific kind creative memoir, the creator of a genre that has not been duplicated. Although she wrote *Zulen y yo* in the 20s, it is in this work that we perceive

the aesthetic of modernism to have been realized in its fullest form. She combined positivist philosophy, orientalist materialism and romantic psychology.

Pedro Zulen

Pedro Zulen was the son of Pedro Francisco Zulen (Yua Zung Theng), a Chinese immigrant from Guangdong Province who came to Peru as a plantation worker and later opened a tea-packaging business in Callao. His mother, Petronila Irene Aymar y Salazar, was a Mestiza woman from Ica. In 1889, at the time of Zulen's birth, the Chinese community was ascendant. This was in large part because of the community's success navigating the political tensions between Peru and Chile during La Guerra de la Pacífica.

The theme of rapid ascension would mark Zulen's life. Although he died at just 36 years of age, he was incredibly productive. Between founding la Asociación Indígena and writing a Bachelor's thesis on Bergson and a post-doctoral thesis on Neohegelianism and Neorealism, he also completed research at Harvard, where he studied library science. Upon returning to Peru he put in place a plan for the development of the collection at the library at La Universidad Mayor de San Marcos. It was this work, specifically, that led the preeminent scholar of Peruvian history and materialism Jorge Basadre to recognize Zulen as a foundational figure in the 20th century Peruvian intellectual community.⁸³

⁸³ Alberto Loza Nehmad, currently of La Universidad de San Marcos, quotes Basadre and analyzes their relationship: “«El valor primordial de esta obra de Zulen llegó a ser sólo el de habersabido suscitar. Trajo a su oficina, que vegetaba casi desapercibida, ese ritmo febril de los privilegiados centros de cultura, e hizo de ella no un centro burocrático sino un dinámico instrumento. Incrementó considerablemente los libros convirtiendo a la Biblioteca de la Universidad en la mejor del país en cuanto se refiere a la producción moderna...»” (129)

It is very difficult to know how Zulen identified ethnically.⁸⁴ When he was born, he had two names: Pedro Zulen and Zun Leng. This was typical not only of Chinese individuals, but also of indigenous and mestizo individuals born in Peru at the end of the 19th century, and it no doubt owed as much to bureaucratic conventions surrounding birth and death certificates inherited from the viceroyalties as to personal preference. However, when he began to write, Zulen used a different name altogether, Neluz. An anagram of Zulen, Neluz has a vaguely, and generically indigenous ring to it, but no obvious associations. The choice to go by “Neluz” may represent an attempt at self-autochthonization, or simply an effort to cast off the past and start again.

There is some evidence that Zulen may have embraced a pan-Asian identity and rejected inter-Asian identity politics in Callao. We know that in the 1920s in Callao and Lima there existed tension between the local Chinese and Japanese, owing, partly, to the fact that some Chinese immigrants were critical of Japanese imperialism. Dora Mayer, in her *Memorias*, speaks to this tension when she states that she almost collaborated with a Japanese newspaper, but was ultimately not allowed to because of her association with the Chinese community.⁸⁵ Zulen, however, preferred Japanese poetry, and is credited

⁸⁴ José B. Adolph imagines that Zulen felt his ethnic otherness cutely, that it predisposed him to be less empathetic towards the other others that surrounded him, but that he overcame this through his pragmatism: “Mi niñez de chinito de la calle Boza me dictó un orgullo intelectual que omitió la compasión: fue la razón y la madurez lo que, mucho más tarde, me obligó a la solidaridad con los que sufren. He querido más que nada, triunfar, y comprendo ahora que esa voluntad no era sino una sublimada sed de venganza. Venganza de pobre, de oriental.” (1983)

⁸⁵ “Mi amigo pensaba incluirme en los colaboradores de “Perú Jiho,” pero supongo que se oponía a eso una desconfianza de la Legación Japonesa – considerando mis vinculaciones con el lado chino. Aunque con preferencia para los chinos he sido – pro-asiática en general, censurando el prejuicio de razas que por todos lados se pronuncia.” (1983)

with introducing haiku to Latin America: “Al golpe del oro solar / Estrella en astillas / El vidrio del mar.” (Zulen)

Certainly, orientalism was a feature of both modernist Latin American prose and poetry and the literature of *la generación de 1900*, which inherited these tropes from the modernists. So the orientalist tendencies of an author of East Asian parentage should not necessarily be taken as self-referential. Generally, however, orientalism in modernist Latin American literature is ekphrastic, not mimetic: It hinges on descriptions of oriental art rather than the imitation of South East Asian art forms.

It is my position that these ekphrases are not truly referential to the Orient. Rather, they serve to render domestic material culture, during a protracted process of industrialization, transparent. This is because oriental crafts, including mass produced silk, ceramic and wicker, are markers of bourgeois consumption in Peru, Ecuador and Costa Rica. This had been true in Mexico in the late 18th century. But the enjoyment of these objects in the Andes and Central America did not peak till the late 19th century.⁸⁶

When we find these kinds of objects haphazardly listed in the work of writers such as Ruben Dario’s (see *El rey burgués*) what we are actually encountering is a list of wares that can be placed in proximity with one another, without producing any semiotic meaning. This is because these objects were not made to be related to one another, but rather, for export. And their consumption was motivated not by any coherent aesthetic ideology, but by the prerogative of consumption itself. Far from representing the aesthetic

⁸⁶ Evelyn Hu-DeHart. “*Mexican Manila: A Trans-Pacific Maritime Enterprise and America’s First Chinatown.*” Keynote Speech at JHUPLAS Annual Meeting 2014.

harmony that modernism was, erroneously, supposed to represent, these scenes are disorienting and discomforting. Their intricacy only underscores this.

Zulen's own poetry however is not ekphrastic. It is authentically animist in the way that it treats natural and material objects. Ignacio López-Calvo, writing on Zulen's prose-poem "El olmo incierto de la nevada" says "In the Japanese haiku tradition that Zulen admired, the narrator tries to decipher his destiny and find answers to metaphysical questions by observing nature's season changes." (49) Historically, Zulen's poetry has been judged quite harshly. And, while López-Calvo appreciates Zulen's poetry as the ground on which Zulen claimed his Chinese identity, he adds to this negative judgment: "The frequent exclamations, pathetic fallacies, and references to cemeteries give the collection Romantic overtones." (48)

However, Zulen's poetry deserves to be reevaluated. It distinguishes itself because of the frank, literal treatment that it gives to his most esoteric philosophical ideas. Many of the lyrics that he wrote which have been taken for romantic metaphors are either sophisticated language games, or frank truth-claims. This is certainly true in the case of "El olmo incierto de la nevada", which ends with the following line: "De no tener algo de olmo, no habría congeniado con él, no le habría comprendido." López-Calvo summarizes the significance of this line: "In the end, the narrator concludes that if he has been able to understand the tree, it is because he is also part elm." (50)

This is *not* a neoclassical appropriation of the story of Daphne, which it would have doubtlessly been if Mayer had written this verse. Zulen believes that the self cannot understand anything outside itself, and whatever the self understands that is not the self,

is also therefore the self. Zulen also believes that this understanding is partial and incomplete. Since the self is not, ultimately, all of the thing that it understands.

Zulen's poetic practice was still nascent at the time of his death. But the few poems of quality that he did leave behind anticipate the fiction of an international vanguard: His treatment of nonhuman life and of landscape calls to mind Cortázar and Neruda. The assumption that whatever one can say must in some sense be true anticipates the application of Wittgenstein to poetry.

Zulen's philosophical writing is marked by this same literal treatment of reality, the same frankness. And it is therefore ironic that much of this writing is about Henri Bergson, a philosopher who relied heavily on metaphorical language.

Zulen's conciseness reveals his competence in each of the philosophical fields that he treats. It also is a form of praxis for Zulen. Zulen increasingly understood his own mission as a social servant to the be that of creating an infrastructure for the transmission of information. His prose takes on the architectural, and bureaucratic qualities of his ideal library.

La filosofía de lo inexpresable

Zulen's *Filosofía de lo inexpresable* provides an exceptionally clear description of the situation of Henri Bergson and idealism at the beginning of the twentieth century. In representing the controversy between idealism and positivism for a Latin American audience, Zulen purged it of jargon and nonessential references. This allowed him to make his own interventions.

Zulen begins by recognizing one of the qualities of Bergson's writing that led to his being forgotten later in the twentieth century, at least until Deleuze resurrected him in *Bergsonism* (1966): His tendency to speak in metaphors: "con ... un atavío de metáforas que ... sugestionan" (18) In a speech no doubt inspired by Bergson's metaphorism, the same one that graces the opening of this chapter, Zulen states that "para prender fuego a los ídolos encerrados en la capilla ardiente del lenguaje, bastóle la llama de la vida", Here, Zulen explains precisely what it is that he finds valuable in Bergson's thought:

Bergson has affirmed that science relies on the creation of systems to understand reality. Namely, mathematics and language. But while these systems are part of reality, and therefore worthy of exploration, they can only be used to explore themselves. The belief that they can be used to explore reality as a whole is an illusion, one that is ironically reinforced by the *rhetoric* of intellectualism: "frente a los escribas (del intelectualismo) ... cabalga un sinnúmero de papagayos ... y hay peligro de que se confirme la incisiva e irónica frase de David Hume: << La victoria no es ganada por los hombres en arma que manejan la lanza y el sable, sino por los trompeteros, tambores y músico del ejército. >>

And yet, as Zulen observes, literature has the power to testify to the existence of parts of reality that have not been, or that cannot be described by language. This is because of literature's diegetic, or world-holding quality, and its related ability to make grand deictic pronouncements: "cuando (el más subjetivo poeta) quiera expresarse sin recurrir a imágenes sacadas de la Naturaleza, y cuando aquél quiera expresar lo más inexpresable, apelará a cosas también inexpresables." It is important to note, though, that Zulen does not privilege literary experience as a special type of experience where this

kind of intuition can be practiced. The main realm in which intuition is exerted is, in fact, daily life, where it motivates us to make similar deictic gestures.

Despite the apocalyptic poesy of this introduction, Zulen is conservative when describing the importance of Bergson to the history of consciousness. To begin with, Zulen acknowledges that Bergson has inherited his *antiintellectualismo* by way of William James. In fact, it was William James who offered, “la única aprobación de valor para los doctrinas (de Bergson)” (20). Another problem with Bergson is that he has become a staple of salon philosophy; discussions of Bergson pair well with tea. In a sentence that reveals Zulen’s ignorance of the participation of women in philosophy he laments, “le ha traído la denominación poco grata de filósofo de moda al punto que ya no son solo las mujeres las que se disputan al escucharlo” (11).

Zulen wonders if the relegation of Bergson to the salon owes simply to the mass appeal of his language or if it is also produced by the fact that Europe, following the First World War, psychologically depends upon its intellectualism. But Zulen is still sympathetic towards those who are suspicious of Bergson because of the philosopher’s popularity. He acknowledges that there are serious problems with the way that Bergson transmits his ideas: “Hay muchas cosas en su filosofía todavía no claramente emitidas” (21).

Zulen’s own criticism of Bergson, and the real point of *Filosofía de lo inexpresable*, is that the philosopher fell into the same rationalist traps that he warned others about. Before the inexpresable, “Bergson no querrá declararse vencido y levantará entonces la arquitectura de su sistema” (28): Zulen broadly sketches this system. He clarifies Bergson’s position that logical systems intervene in a world that is perpetually

moving, to give birth to stillness. He also clarifies Bergson's position that intuition is a sense by which a person inducted into these systems can still become aware of the existence of perpetual movement outside of them:

Bergson establecerá entonces dos clases de conocimiento: el ... mediante la inteligencia y el ... mediante la intuición. Por el primero retendríamos de la realidad moviente solo inmovilidades eventuales con las que crearíamos símbolos que nos permitirían en cierta medida prever el porvenir y gobernar sobre la naturaleza. (28)

Zulen's observation is that Bergson is apparently unable to describe this binary system without idealizing a locus of contiguity within it. Even if Bergson himself knows better.

Bergson compares memory to perception, claiming that they both involve the reception of "imágenes que se desplazan en el espacio" (37). There is no difference between memory and perception, until its content gets coded: "No alcanzamos a comprender por qué habría diferencia de naturaleza entre percepción y recuerdo puros; solo encontraremos diferencia de calidad, de contenido." (37) Memory, in other words, is merely the reception of images that we *call* past.⁸⁷ Neither perception nor memory are more real experiences in and of themselves. Neither perception nor memory are more reliable tools for accessing an external reality. And both perception and memory can transform into one another.

The difference between memory and perception is produced by the possibility for perception to become memory and for memory to become perception, a transformation

⁸⁷ The extent to which we can trust these images to represent any reality outside of ourselves is not something that Zulen's text clearly addresses. My own impression is that Zulen was not entirely opposed to the idea of the past as a self-annihilating thing; Or to the idea that one could create the past in the present. (For more on this idea see...)

that takes place in time. In either case, both of these processes respond to the possibility that the person receiving these images might use them as a pretext for taking action in the world. When Bergson compares perception to memory by saying that it is “el grado más bajo del espíritu” he is only referring to a species of perception that is being transformed into memory, and that thus contains images that are in reserve, and not readily being used by a person as inspiration to act. Vice versa: memory has a mediatic power, because when we access our memories (memoria) we can respond to our memories (recuerdos), which are images. (Zulen 36-37)

Here we can see where and why Bergson appealed to Zulen as a pragmatist. But Zulen becomes frustrated with Bergson’s inability to recognize, or at least offer explicit disclaimers for his own rationalism. Zulen criticizes Bergson’s exploration of the locus of the transformation of memory into perception and perception into memory as an idealization of an experience that Bergson doesn’t really have access to:

el dualismo, que sería sólo formal, aparece cuando tomo los extremos y hago abstracción del intermedio, el cual escapa a toda explicación psicológica como en el fenómeno químico escapan a toda explicación los cambios atómicos interiores. (38)

Still, Zulen’s respect for Bergson remains intact, as he is able to move past these pitfalls of Bergson’s writing to appreciate his comments on Perception. The activity of perception, in Zulen’s consideration, is the chief prerogative of human beings and naturally leads to description. As to the pressing question of what we should do with the descriptions of *others*, Zulen grappled in *Filosofía* with Bergson’s hermeneutics. He summarizes Bergson: “El hecho de que la obra a menudo da lugar a interpretaciones varias” suggests that “el pensamiento desborda lo escrito” (34). Here, Zulen recognizes

that Bergson believed in the existence of the signified as an ideal object, one that could survive human life. But he, Zulen, is not comfortable with this. While he recognizes the power of the signified to transcend text, he looks to the existence of human life as a pretext for that transcendence.

In doing so, Zulen developed the imminence of praxis as a corollary concept for Bergson's *elan vital*. One could only remember, perceive or write so long as practical action in the world were possible. Here it is important to clarify that Zulen totally rejected Bergson's spiritualism. In fact, he calls Bergson's premonition that the spirit survives the flesh a "ficción" and an escapist "acomodación lógica." But it is also important to clarify that Zulen's belief in the existence of a material support for memory and perception was not a form of neurocognitivism either. Because Zulen identifies the possibility of praxis with the individual's situation, not as an organism with a brain, but as someone living with other beings and with other things. In this way, it is really Zulen, and not Bergson, who anticipates Deleuze's figurations of affect.

Zulen's reflections on Bergson's concept of the *elan vital* insist on our psychological isolation. As Zulen would come to reassert in his second philosophical treatise, *Del neohegelianismo al neorealismo* (1924) (*he spelled neorealismo with one r*), in his discussions of Bradley and Bosanquet (15-20), while intuition tells us about a moving reality that exists outside both our own moving reality, and the stationary objects of consideration of our rational systems, there is absolutely no possibility that through intuition we might really come to know anything specific about that other reality. This is true on both a cosmic level, and on a personal level. Gestaltpsychology is useless for telling me about any part of myself that I cannot pragmatically act on. And yet, because I

speaking a deictic language, some of my annunciations, or gestures might be predicated on that part's existence.

I don't think Zulen was existentially tormented by these limits, which he imposed on himself. If anything, it appears that he rejoiced in the delicate contingency of memory, perception and communication. Where Mayer reads in Zulen's poetry, most of which was composed while he was at Harvard, a sadness and confusion relating to his undetermined status as a lover, a spouse and a member of the Latin American community, I see a joy and satisfaction in Zulen's realization of a series of minute, fleeting, previously unimagined opportunities to relate to different parts of himself and a supposedly "foreign" landscape.

More to the point, Zulen's poetic practice was not, as Mayer believed, the workshop of his soul. That is, it was not a place to which Zulen retreated in order to produce himself as the sort of sensible person who could have the sort of sensible relationships that would be the foundation of his political charisma. Zulen, by the early twenties, seems to have had no interest in developing his charismatic potential. Instead, Zulen's model, by 1924, of the perfect political actor is Bertrand Russell, a late, unexpected subject of *Del neohegelianismo al neorealismo*.

This is quite surprising, because all of *Del neohegelianismo al neorealismo* builds towards a refutation of what Zulen calls neorealism, a movement within which Zulen situates Russell. Zulen refuted essentially every major philosophical premise that he attributed to this movement, and especially its devolution into behaviorism.

In *Del neohegelianismo*, Zulen expresses horror at the violently irrational substrate of the North American body politic – he mentions, specifically, as a

manifestation of this, the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Neorealism, in North America, persists as a state of denial about these activities. Zulen is especially concerned with the fallacies central to John B. Watson's system of behaviorism. "Basta una pregunta para hacer titubear al behaviorista. Es esta: ¿existe el pensamiento? ... Mas, el behaviorista reacciona y proclama ... que la psicología no tiene necesidad de saber que el hombre piensa. Y en los tratados del behaviorismo un capítulo sobre <<El hábito del lenguaje>> reemplaza al capítulo sobre <<Los procesos del pensamiento>>" (60)

In Zulen's consideration, almost nothing meaningful that people or animals do can be considered a behavior in the sense that the behaviorists imagined. Speaking is not a behavior. Dying is not a behavior. Being born is not a behavior.

Zulen identifies Bertrand Russell as "la figura única del neorealismo, que hace notar esto." And in his appendix to *Neohegelianismo* he observes that Russell developed his own understanding of psychology while in China ("En 1921 Russell estuvo en China y enseñó Filosofía en la Universidad oficial de Pekin. Producto de su enseñanza es su libro *El Análisis Del Espíritu*" donde discute los datos presentes de la Psicología." (79)) It is quite tempting to imagine that Zulen was, at least in part, attracted to Russell as a transpacific philosopher.

However, Zulen is, above all, interested in the life of Russell, the philosopher's praxis, and the question of praxis during times of horror:

Cuando el incendio y la muerte se desencadena sobre las masas humanas, los pensadores asoman. Unos sienten renacer el patriotismo. Bergson, ante el panorama de Francia devastada reniega de su raza judía y se proclama francés. Wundt entona himnos triunfales cascos prusianos. Royce sondea en vano la patria democrática en busca de fuerzas que repelan y arrasen para siempre con todos los

imperialismos guerreros. Bradley ... Hume ... Bertrand Russell, más radical, más rebelde, condena la guerra por santa o justa que se la predique. (75)

In fact, the entire appendix of *Nehegalianismo* is a biography of Russell. In Russell, Zulen found a model for himself, not as a philosopher, but as a technician of arts and letters; A reason to dedicate himself to the daily labor of the study of modern librarianship, and the development of the collection at San Marcos.

Zulen himself against Mayer

At times, Zulen appears in his writing to be an unwitting ally to Mayer and her hermeneutics. When describing the deictic function of literature, he cites Oscar Wilde: “Salomé ... dirá: Bien sé que tú me habrías amado y el misterio del amor es más grande que el misterio de la muerte.” Isn’t this the very idea that inspired Mayer to write *Zulen y yo*: That if our grief tells us, over and over again, that someone is dead; then love tells us that there are still other intuitive avenues of investigation open to us, that connect us with the dead.

But these synchronicities are accidental. Given his philosophy, it is entirely untenable that Zulen would ever have admitted as useful or defensible Mayer’s hermeneutics for the simple reason that he viewed life as a predicate for all hermeneutics. Zulen was never more dismissive than when he referred to what he considered Bergson’s abuse of the sort of language games that Wilde’s characters participate in as proof of the soul’s immortality. If a text’s meaning exceeded its content, then this was precisely because there was a living body to receive that content.

However, on a more optimistic note, Zulen's philosophical orientation might also have limited the extent to which he was existentially threatened by Mayer's project. Perhaps, at the time of his death, Zulen was in the process of constructing a kind of linguistic privacy that was less nihilistic than other linguistic privacies.

This private Zulen is the Zulen that Adolph portrays in *Dora*.

José B. Adolph

José B. Adolph was born to a German Jewish family in 1933 and brought to Peru when he was five, shortly before World War II. He began his career as a novelist with a dictator novel, *La ronda de los generales* (1973). From 1974 onwards he primarily wrote speculative fiction. His novel, *Mañana, las ratas* (1984), imagines the development of technologies of the future in the Northern Hemisphere and a new regime of techno-imperialism in Latin America. His trilogy, *De mujeres y heridas* (2000), contains three novels, “*Ningún Dios*”, “*Especulaciones sobre otro Barco*” and “*La Profunda Maldad del Universo*”. It is about intergenerational trauma stemming from the Holocaust and La Guerra Popular in Peru. It centers on a community of Ashkanazi Jews in Peru, and on women whose mental illness and sexual promiscuity imbue them with a dimension of holiness that stands in relief against the profanity of contemporary reality. *De mujeres y heridas* is a messy but substantial literary achievement that evokes Bolaño's *2666*.

Dora is readily intelligible in the larger corpus of works by Adolph as a novel that explores the phenomenology of disaster. Because, while *Dora*, more than any other quoting novel that I have explored in this dissertation, directly quotes from or adapts its

source material – a substantial portion of the novel is pure transcription - it manages to portray, without explicitly saying as much, that its two main characters are aware of the impending failure of their project to create a Peru in which civil society is authentically multicultural, and of the violent extremism that Peru would witness late in the 20th century.

Dora

Dora is comprised of 70 short chapters, which are told from the perspectives of Dora, Pedro and *El historiador*, a younger, mutual acquaintance of the couple probably inspired, partially, by Jorge Basadre. There are also two preliminary chapters, which correspond to *el autor* and *el narrador*. The first chapter is autobiographical; in it José B. Adolph reflects on his geographic proximity to Mayer: “Veinte años de mi propia vida transcurrieron a pocos kilómetros de una mujer que persistía en firmar Dora Mayer de Zulen; en todo ese tiempo jamás escuché hablar de ella” (9). The second chapter is metaliterary; it begins: “Todos mis personajes han muerto. En junio desapareció el historiador” (13) If it were not for this chapter we could assume that *el historiador* was the novel’s narrator. But this chapter tells us this isn’t the case, and that *el historiador* is dead. Adolph thus constructs a diegetic world composed of intertext, while studiously avoiding any hint of mysticism.

The chapters are organized thematically, not chronologically. In 1985 the historian dies (Basadre died in 1980, which undermines my last point about him). In 1925 Pedro Zulen dies. The historian is at his funeral. In 1889, Dora, who has not yet met

Pedro, vows to remain celibate and independent for life. In 1909 Pedro meets Dora: “esta mujer de rostro rosado, cuadrado, mal trajeada, cuarentona, debe ser la famosa Mayer. Es, en este momento, la más profunda de nuestras escritoras.” (25) In 1904 Pedro is suffocating under anti-Oriental xenophobia. He takes refuge in school, “Chino-e-mierda. Ese soy yo. El chino-e-mierda ronda el Palais Concert, a las seis de la tarde: los veo, entro, me siento. Aquí no soy sino el chino, sin mierda. Puedo escuchar.” (29) The climactic moment, the moment that remains mysterious almost until the end of the novel, is 1920, when Pedro visits Dora at her house and they either do or do not have sex.

There is no reason to recreate that suspense here. Adolph reveals that *both* Dora and Pedro are telling the truth.

In the novel’s 61st chapter, Pedro affirms that he has never divulged the truth about his encounter with Dora to anyone:

Amigos de confianza me han preguntado, en varias oportunidades, si es cierta la aseveración de Dora Mayer de haber realizado nupcias naturales. Particularmente ansioso por conocer la respuesta se mostró el joven historiador... Siempre lo negué. (138)

But at this moment Pedro is recovering from a recent episode of acute illness. Energized by the catharsis of recovery, he decides that he will tell his friend, *padre Arruti*, about his sins: “Habré de utilizar los recursos retóricos más complejos para explicar al padre ... que ambos estábamos en lo cierto” (139).

Pedro then reveals that on the night in question he proposed “nupcias naturales” to Dora, without intending to suggest that they have physical intercourse. He reveals that he has never been able to maintain an erection in order to have sex with a woman and that

on the night in question he was not able to either. Dora, who was even more inexperienced than Pedro, mistook an extremely intimate embrace for intercourse.

Because of the way that this scene is narrated, it constitutes a part of the rebuttal with which Adolph has supplied Zulen in *Dora*. And it does not matter that Zulen is confessing to a sex act, or that he states that, in the end, Mayer told more truth than he did. Zulen's description of the embrace conforms to an aesthetic that we already identify with his writing. It completely reveals, but simultaneously defamiliarizes the sex act. The description of the sex is explicit enough that we could call it carnivalesque, if it weren't for the fact that it lacks the affective charge implied by that term. This is not a frenetic encounter between two people participating in a rite in which past and present, high and low culture, collide. Instead, Pedro observes the encounter as an artifact of human biology, that has suddenly been thrust before his consideration. He is more intellectually engaged than disgusted by it.

We can contrast this scene with the many sex scenes in Adolph's *De mujeres y heridas* that conform to the author's sexual aesthetic; these scenes are surreal, and laden with affect. We can also contrast this scene with the way it would have been written if Adolph had stayed within the modernist aesthetic preferred by Mayer, and which Adolph sometimes imitates when describing sentimental exchanges between Dora and Pedro.

The construction of this scene therefore constitutes the first half of Zulen's rebuttal. The second half is constituted by Zulen's visions of the future.

In *Zulen y yo* Mayer attributed Zulen's abandonment of the Asociación Pro-Indígena to his subconscious self-sabotage and did not address the historical events that changed the meaning of the API for Zulen: Margaritza Zegarra Flórez outlines these

succinctly: “La Asociación Pro-Indígena se disolvió en 1916, en parte porque la sublevación de Rumi Maqui dejó poco espacio para la vía legal, dando paso a posturas divergentes entre los miembros: básicamente legalista la de Mayer y Capelo, y radical, la de Zulen y Chuquihuanca” (36)

Adolph preserves Mayer’s construction of Zulen as a tragic archetype. He is able to do this because he understands Mayer’s *gestaltpsychologie* perfectly.⁸⁸ But he expands and makes explicit the stakes of Zulen’s political project, for Zulen. He can do *this* because he situates Zulen in a world in which he has foresight into Peru’s political future.

The 14th Chapter of the novel is one of two stand alone chapters told from Zulen’s point of view that do not advance the narrative of his and Mayer’s relationship. In it,

⁸⁸ Observe Adolph’s appropriation of this passage, here quoted in full, from *Zulen y yo*, in which Mayer discussed Zulen’s efficacy. Adolph’s transcription of this passage subtly suppresses the possibility of the success of Mayer’s *gestaltpsychologie* by emphasizing the past, rather than the future.

Sigo escribiendo lo que sin duda será el libro más importante de mi vida: “Zulen y yo”. Acuso al hombre que amo Y tengo que enjuiciarlo públicamente, no para que se le condene, sino para que se absuelva de lo que su propio comportamiento sugiere: una maldad sin fondo, que es totalmente contraria a la verdad de Zulen ... No, Mayer no es la víctima y Zulen el verdugo, no. Zulen ha sufrido como yo, porque ... **en un arranque de ironía sublime, ha asumido la maldad que ha querido fustigar.**

José B Adolph, *Dora*

Nadie acusaba a Zulen, y yo lo acusé. Nadie acusaba a mí, y yo me acusé a mi misma ...

Pero, ¿soy yo víctima y Zulen el verdugo ... ? No; Zulen sufre como yo, porque es solo un actor que representa al común villano humano, sin serlo. **Zulen se ha prestado á encarnar voluntariamente, en un arranque de ironía sublime, la maldad humana ...**

Yo acuso al hombre que amo. Y tengo que entablarle juicio, no en persecución de su condena, sino de su absolución ante la faz de la humanidad.

Dora Mayer, *Zulen y yo*

Zulen is standing on the corner of Washington and el Paseo Colón, watching the spectacle of Carnival in 1924. But this is not just any Carnival; The revelry has been coopted as a pep rally for split-term president-dictator Augusto B. Leguía: “De los carros aplauden a Leguía... es su gente, su clase, su hechura. Los ha hecho sentirse importantes ... y este público, aunque no sea exactamente leguista, está recibiendo las migajas de su prosperidad.” (36).

Zulen understands, preternaturally, that as the public embraces Leguía for a second time, they also turn their backs irrevocably on a multicultural Peru. He describes the way the crowd mistreats him, a Chinese man in their midst - something, it is implied, that does not normally happen: “Son una colonia extranjeras que da la espalda al Perú que yo conozco. A mí me dicen “chino” estos extranjeras, aspirantes a gringos” (36) He also describes an overwhelming feeling of objectivity before, and distance from the crowd: “El único con cara de piedra soy yo” (35).

This last quote, in which Pedro says he is the only one with a face of stone, is a nice touch on Adolph’s part. It is a reference to one of the only poems that Zulen wrote in which he explicitly references his Chineseness: “En Oriental decir me dicen: Amuleto impreciado”. (115) This is an enigmatic poem, in which Zulen translates his own name, Pedro, which means stone, back into an imaginary Oriental language. The poem ends with a question that Mayer took to have been directed at her, “¿Qué valdría yo sin ti?” but that, in the context of the poem, seems to actually be a reflection about the poet’s dependency on those that name him.

The chapter ends with Zulen in a cassandrist depression, wondering what could possibly save his country: “algo en su alegría me encoge el corazón ... Me voy a pie a mi

casa, meneando la cabeza, tarareando cancioncitas de carnaval, y pensando: ‘A este país, quién lo salva?’” (36) Although this chapter comes almost at the beginning of the novel, we know, because of the date, that Zulen has only months to live.

Reflections

In spite of this lugubrious interlude, in *Dora*, Zulen never actually comes to feel that his death is imminent. In the last chapter that he narrates, the one in which he reflects on his sexual encounter with Mayer, he feels a recovery from his intermittent illnesses is imminent. And shortly before this, he visits José Carlos Mariátegui for advice on what he should do about his losses, starting with the loss of his own name, to Mayer. Mariátegui’s advice might be Adolphs: Mariátegui warns Zulen that he cannot trust that time will overcome Mayer’s slander. Because, as a romantic poet says, love is like a flame, and time is like the wind. The wind puts out small flames, but gives renewed life to big ones. Here, Mariátegui might as well be talking about discourses. Mariátegui’s advice to Zulen is to run. But not to exile himself to another country; geographic distance is also like the wind. Rather, to flee into his work, that of the library, which is in service, of course, to the revolution. Only Zulen’s philological labor can save him from the overwhelming power of Mayer’s discourse:

- Quienes creen en un alma inmortal, no tienen problema alguno en recomendar paciencia. Yo no tengo esa suerte. Si usted no la ama, si no está dispuesto a desposarla, y carece de piel de elefante, sólo se me ocurre una huida. Detesto proponerlo, pero por el momento no tengo otra sugerencia. Dice algún poeta romántico que el amor es como el fuego y el tiempo como el viento: el viento apaga los fuegos pequeños, pero aviva los grandes.

- ¿Está usted seguro que la distancia no es también como el viento?

Mariátegui sonríe:

- Es cierto. Es cierto. Pero entonces, querido Zulen, sólo queda desarrollar esa piel de elefante y hundirse en el trabajo. (88)

BIBLIOGRAPHY CHAPTER 4

Adolph, José B. *De Mujeres Y Heridas*. Lima, Perú: Mosca Azul Editores, 2000

Dora: Novela. Lima, Perú: PEISA, 1989

López-Calvo, Ignacio. *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru*. , 2014.

Mayer, de Z. D. *La Poesía De Zulen: In Memoriam*. Lima: Imp. "Lux" de E.L. Castro, 1927.

Mayer, de Z. D. *Lo que ha significado la Pro-indígena*", *Amauta*, Año 1, Número 1, pág. 22, Lima, septiembre de 1926 (N. de los E.).

Mayer, de Z. D, and Y R. E. Boccolini. *Memorias*. Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Seminario de Historia Rural Andina, 1992

Mayer, de Z. D. *Zulen Y Yo: Testimonio De Nuestro Desposorio Ofrecido a La Humanidad*. Lima: Imprenta Garcilaso, 1925.

Mariátegui, José Carlos. *Aspectos del problema indígena*. Mundial, Lima, 17 de diciembre de 1926.

Quintanilla, Pablo. *Pedro Zulen and the reception of pragmatism in Peru*. Ed. Pappas, Gregory F. *Pragmatism in the Americas*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.

Zegarra Flórez, Margarita. *Dora Mayer, los indígenas y la nación peruana a inicios del siglo XX*. Anuario de Estudios Americanos, 66.1, enero-junio, 251-288, Sevilla, 2009.

Zulen, Pedro S, Ávila R. Quiroz, Pablo Quintanilla, and Joel Rojas. *Pedro S. Zulen: Escritos Reunidos*. , 2015.

Zulen, Pedro S. *La Filosofía De Lo Inexpresable: Bosquejo De Una Interpretación Y Una Crítica De La Filosofía De Bergson*. Lima: Impreso en los talleres tipograficos de Sanmarti y Cia, 1920.

Zulen, Pedro S. *Del Neohegelianismo Al Neorealismo*. Lima, 1924.

Loza Nehmad, Alberto. "Y el claustro se abrió al siglo: Pedro Zulen y el Boletín Bibliográfico de la Biblioteca de San Marcos (1923-1924)", *Letras*, Vol. 77, 111-112, 2006.